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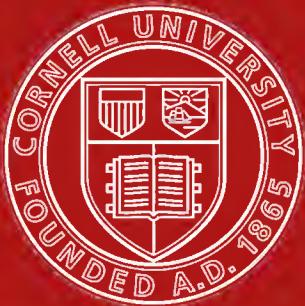
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The Times

Irish Home Rule Debates. 1893 PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

FEBRUARY 13 TO FEBRUARY 17, 1893.

PRICE 2s. 6d. PER NUMBER, OR £3 PER SESSION POST PAID.

HOUSE OF LORDS (pp. 45 to 56).

No. 4. Vol. VIII.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (pp. 297 to 420).

No. 4. Vol. XXII.

LONDON :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY GEORGE EDWARD WRIGHT,

AT THE TIMES OFFICE, PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE.

(Entered at Stationers' Hall.)

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noble lord opposite (Lord Balfour of Burleigh). In some favoured spots there was large provision for secondary education; and in some parts, and particularly in the Highlands, there was little or none. If it were desirable, as it was confessed to be by the giving of the grant, to afford equal opportunities to the people throughout Scotland to get the benefit of secondary education, and if the grant were divided according to valuation, districts already favoured by existing provisions would receive money they would have some difficulty in spending. When it was proposed to make the grants in the same manner as the residue equivalent grants were made, it must not be overlooked that in the distribution of these to county councils and town councils some of them received a few pounds only. In some cases the amounts allocated would be so small that it would be impossible to expend them to any advantage. If the grants were to be distributed in the fashion suggested by the noble marquis, the only bodies that could do so properly were the school boards. Some years ago certain town councils were interested in the borough schools, but now their interest in them had been transferred to the school boards. The noble marquis asked for delay, but he had probably overlooked the purpose for which the committees, on whose behalf he spoke, had been instituted. The county committees now in Scotland had been instituted solely for the purpose of inquiry, and not for the purpose of administering the funds. Great differences of opinion were expressed as to the position of the schools which might properly be used for secondary education, and the object of the institution of the county council committees was that reports on that subject might be made, and that the waste which might have arisen under the original memorandum of the Department might be avoided. In Wales they were dealing with a case where there was not an uniform system of school boards; but in Scotland there was such an uniform system, and it would be necessary that any scheme which might be produced should be formulated by a Minister and put before the country upon authority. Any delay in this matter might be a serious thing. The primary object in giving the grant was that something might be done for theburgh schools in Scotland, which, from various circumstances, had long stood in an anomalous position, and there was no reason whatever why those schools should not receive a share of the £60,000. He would like to point out that the report of the committee over which he had presided especially guarded itself in the concluding paragraph against the idea that this system of distributing the grants was one which they recommended as a permanent method of distribution. They desired to state their opinion that it must be a matter for further consideration whether this system of grants was the best mode of supporting secondary education in the future. Upon that point the committee reserved its opinion. What the future system was to be could not be decided until the Secretary for Scotland or the Government for the time being took up the question of secondary education. If the noble marquis would induce his county committees seriously to consider the matter something might be done in the end to get that local control which was the object of the noble marquis. In the case of Wales, conferences were held between various counties with great advantage, and in the same way something might be done in Scotland to formulate a scheme for the conduct of secondary education in the future. But as he had said, the object of those county committees was by no means

the administration of the grants, but to make inquiry.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said that his noble friend had to a considerable extent anticipated what he had to say. The matter had for a considerable time been under the consideration of his noble friend who had presided over the committee. That committee had made its report, and a minute was laid before Parliament before the close of the last Session. The minute which had been laid before Parliament the first day of the present Session was in no respect different. As his noble friend had pointed out, the function of the county committees was somewhat misapprehended. They were appointed for the purpose of recommending what schools should receive a grant. He was told that there were two classes of opinion. There were some who thought that secondary education ought to be concentrated in large schools; others that it should be given in schools scattered over the country. The Secretary for Scotland, however, would secure a fair distribution for the rural districts. It was in order as far as possible to secure such fair distribution that these committees had been organized. The intention of the grant was not to create secondary schools, but to aid existing schools. It was obvious that if an attempt were to be made with £60,000 to create secondary schools all over Scotland, the result would be that only a very small number of places would be benefited. It was open to noble lords to discuss the proposed distribution at any time in the statutory period during which the minute was required to lie on the table of both Houses of Parliament, when objections made would be listened to and carefully considered. The minute had been framed with a sincere desire to distribute fairly and equitably the amount of money available in the Department; but he did not think it would be desirable to place in the hands of local bodies the entire control of the money to be expended.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION AT DEVIZES.

The BISHOP of SALISBURY asked the Lord President of the Council what provision was to be made for the number of children at Devizes who would apparently be without school accommodation at the end of this month.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said that the managers of the British School at Devizes having given notice of their intention to close it, the school accommodation of the town was to that extent about to be reduced. The question arose as to how the void was to be filled, but when the Department came to consider the whole matter it found it could not proceed without a census of the children of school age. It was obvious that it would be wrong for the Department to take any initiative without first knowing the facts, but; these ascertained, all the necessary steps would be taken as speedily as possible to secure proper and sufficient school accommodation for the place.

The BISHOP of SALISBURY said the point he wished to bring to the knowledge of the House was that the Department had not used due diligence in the matter. The managers gave notice in November last of their intention to close their school on February 28. There had been plenty of time to obtain the necessary information long ago, and he wished, therefore, to say that the Department had not really considered the interest of education.

The House rose at ten minutes past 5 o'clock.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the wool-sack at a quarter-past 4 o'clock.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

LORD NORTON, in putting three questions to the Lord President of the Council, said that a recent departmental circular of inquiries as to sites and sizes of school buildings, playgrounds, and apparatus indicated an intention of withholding grants from schools not coming up to a new standard of sufficiency on all these points. The Code of 1890 demanded generally that all schools receiving grants should satisfy the department as to their healthiness, but restricted the application of any new requirement as to space to new buildings, and it relaxed the rules against building grants so as to afford old schools special aid to conform to the increased requirements. The new circular threatened a general demand for increased requirements on pain of loss of grant even to those which had been built on plans approved at the time by the Department. The struggle was intense for private subscriptions to keep pace with unlimited public taxation in meeting the advancing requirements of school provision and apparatus. An unaided alteration of the terms on which private contributions were given to the public service would probably lose to the country a large number of voluntary schools. The second part of the question referred to numerous manifestoes of the Vice-President indicating greatly enlarged views as to what was called free education for all classes up to the higher regions of science, art, literature, and languages. If this were the policy of the Government it ought to be openly avowed. A few days ago the Vice-President received a deputation, which urged that, not only should instruction be free, but that the children of the poor should be provided with food and clothing in order that they might be able to benefit from instruction. The Vice-President cautioned the deputation that such ideas discarded all sense of parental responsibility, but still he hoped the county councils would soon have fuller powers, so that they could carry out their ideas. The right hon. gentleman foreshadowed the provision of secondary and technical education at the public expense for all classes. Was this the policy of the Government? Then the Vice-President announced an intended concentration of public education in one department. This was desirable in itself; but the waste and evil involved in having several departments concerned in educational work were not so great a mischief as the overlapping and duplication of standards. He concluded by asking the Lord President of the Council whether the Vice-President's circular preparatory to more stringent requirements of school space was meant to apply retrospectively; and whether his proposal of free instruction, at public expense, in science, art, literature, and languages had Government authority; and whether there was any intention of bringing together the various provisions for education now dispersed through four departments.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY, replying to the first question on the paper, reminded the noble lord of the origin of the movement for providing better accommodation in elementary schools. The Royal Commission which reported in June, 1888, stated that the time had come when the State might well be more exact in requiring for school children a proper amount of air and space, suitable premises, and a reasonable extent of playground. That report, which was signed by the noble lord opposite, was the

foundation of the whole matter. The report went on to say that in the opinion of the Commission existing schools should be gradually, within a reasonable limit of time, brought up to such higher standard of accommodation. In the Code of 1890 there was a provision that in the case of existing schools a special grant should be made in the event of their being required to bring their education up to a modern standard. That Code, however, was withdrawn. His noble friend evidently thought that the circular made some great change in the practice of the Department. It was, however, merely a circular of inquiry; for surely it would be admitted that it was the absolute duty of the Department to furnish themselves with correct information. There was nothing, therefore, in the circular which ought to alarm any one who had the interests of education at heart. It seemed to be thought, in some quarters, there was a desire suddenly to come down on voluntary schools throughout the country and make a peremptory demand upon them to bring their accommodation, sanitary provision, and school apparatus up to the higher standard, and so by a side-wind to convert a large number of voluntary schools into Board schools. That, in his opinion, would be a perfectly unjustifiable proceeding. The matter was one of time and opportunity and reasonable treatment of the different schools. He was confident that the managers of voluntary schools, who had done so much for the education of the country, would themselves admit that they must be prepared, in a reasonable time and manner, to bring up their schools to a standard more in accordance with the requirements of the present day. With reference to the second question, relating to free instruction at the public expense in science, art, literature, and languages, he might reply that, as he had never heard of any such proposal, he had no answer to give. The true meaning of any action taken by the Department was neither more nor less to secure that the provisions of the Act relating to free education should be duly carried into effect. With regard to the third point, a departmental committee, consisting of officers of the Charity Commission, the Education Department, and the Department of Science and Art, had been appointed to consider the questions of the organization of secondary education in England and Wales, and the relations of the departments among themselves in connexion with this subject. No scheme could be explained to his noble friend, because no scheme had been formed. It was not, in his opinion, at all an unwise step on the part of the Department to appoint a committee of this kind to consider whether anything could be done.

LORD SANDFORD said that the requirement with respect to the size of classrooms and cloak-rooms pressed very hardly upon some of our present schools. A very stringent and early enforcement of some of the special rules was not possible in many of the voluntary schools. It was required that a school should provide a quarter of an acre for every 250 children. Their lordships had probably seen a school in the Seven Dials. The cost of the site of that school was enormous. According to the rules of the Department one acre ought actually be acquired for the building on that site. It was built in three storeys, and was to accommodate a thousand children. The playground was on the top of the building. There was no space around the school, the walls of which were flush with the streets on either side. It would take an enormous additional cost to acquire an acre on that site. With regard to gymnastic apparatus, if an

inspector visited the school and found none that school should be condemned. Again, the rule was, he believed, that the light should be from the left hand, but a great many schools in London were built with the light facing the children. Were they, then, going to enforce an alteration in the lighting of every school? There were very nearly 6,000 schools in the country which had not 60 children in daily attendance. Were they going to say that these schools must be enlarged for further accommodation? There were 340 schools with less than 20 children in attendance; close upon 1,000 with less than 30 and 1,500 with less than 40. He wanted to know what they were going to do with the Jews' schools, which contained upwards of 4,000 children. Were they going to insist on 1,000 ft. of corridor for hanging up their caps. (A laugh.)

The DUKE of RUTLAND suggested to the noble earl that it might be advantageous that the circular should be couched in terms more in conformity with his own views.

The MARQUIS of SALISBURY deprecated forcing upon the schools a new and more expensive standard. This was a point of great importance, and he thought the Department would do well if it would issue a circular which might be submitted to some non-official critics, so that they might be certain that the plan had been duly considered. The noble earl must be aware that, at this period of distress and difficulty among the working classes, to unexpectedly compel the fulfilment of requirements which were often physically impossible, and which, at all events, would impose an intolerable burden on the Exchequer, already very much overstrained, would be a cruel thing to do; but it would be a much more cruel thing, if they did not really intend to enforce them, to lead people to believe that they were going to do so.

The House rose at 20 minutes past 5 o'clock.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the wool-sack at a quarter-past 4 o'clock.

THE ADDRESS.

The MARQUIS of BREADALEANE (Lord Steward of the Household) brought up her Majesty's reply to the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne.

PRIVATE BILLS.

The following Bills were read a second time:—Aberdeen University Bill, Ayr Harbour Bill, Barking Town Wharf Bill, Belfast Castle (Cnve Hilt Footpath) Bill, Belfast Harbour Commissioners Bill, Belfast Water Bill, Bilston Commissioners (Water) Bill, Blackrock and Kingstown Drainage and Improvement Bill, Bristol Corporation Bill, Croydon Corporation Bill, Dublin Corporation Bill, Durham Coast Railway Bill, East Fife Central Railway Bill, Fishguard Bay Railway and Pier Bill, Folkestone Corporation Bill, Hunslet Railway Bill, Liverpool City Churches Bill, Manchester Corporation Bill, Manchester Corporation (Ship Canal) Bill, Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Transmere Lands) Bill, Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Various Powers) Bill, Mid Lothian County Buildings Bill, Perth Improvement Bill, Pontypridd Local Board (Gas) Bill, Rathmines and Rathgar Water and Improvement Bill, Runcorn Water Bill, St. George the Martyr, Southwark (Rector's Rate) Bill, St. Martin's Rectory (Birmingham) Bill, Salford Corporation (Manchester Ship Canal) Bill, Salford Improvement Bill, Sheffield Corporation Bill, Sheffield Corporation (Water) Bill, South Level Commissioners Bill, Stockton-on-Tees Corporation (Gas)

Bill, Todmerden Local Board Gas Purchases Bill, Waterford Harbour Bill, Water of Leith Purification and Sewerage Bill, and Weaver Navigation Bill.

MINISTERIAL DOUBLE APPOINTMENTS.

LORD STANLEY of ALDERLEY rose to ask the Lord President whether he had applied to the Treasury for the salary belonging to his office, and to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, as guardian of the interests of the Indian taxpayers, he had remonstrated against the salary of the Lord President being provided out of Indian taxes. He contended that the double appointment of Lord Kimberley as Secretary of State for India and Lord President of the Council, and the arrangement by which the last-named salary was charged on the Indian taxpayers, was discreditable to the country and to the Prime Minister who had made it. He thought that the best solution of the difficulty would be that his noble friend should receive the salaries of both the offices which he held. (Laughter.) The duties of both offices were very onerous. With Mr. Acland in the Education Office and little or no restraint exercised over her Majesty's school inspectors, the Lord President would have a good deal to do, while with a falling rupee, Upper Burmah unpacified, and Lieutenant-Governors to restrain, a great deal of extra work would fall upon the Secretary of State for India. Though this would not relieve the Indian Treasury, yet it would remove the feeling of indignation that had been aroused in India by the economy practised by a rich country at the expense of a poor one. He quoted in support of his view the opinions of Lord Halifax and the Duke of Argyll, and maintained that in the circumstances which he had described the Secretary of State for India had no choice but to insist that the First Lord of the Treasury should provide for the Lord President out of the British Exchequer. He would also move for papers.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said that there were no papers on the subject. He was exceedingly obliged to his noble friend for the way in which he had taken up the case. He understood that the noble lord desired to augment the salary by £2,000 a year, though how that arrangement would benefit the Indian taxpayers he did not quite see. His noble friend also suggested that the salary should be divided into two parts, and he furnished an estimate of what the Minister was worth as Lord President. It appeared from this that, comparing the business which fell on the Secretary of State for India with that of the President of the Council, the proportions were as three-fifths to two-fifths. That was a rather undue estimate of the work which fell upon the Secretary of State for India, and the responsibility which he incurred, as compared with his duties as President of the Council. If he personally had to make an arrangement of the precise proportions he would be puzzled to do so. It should be borne in mind, however, that the President of the Council was also a Cabinet Minister, and a considerable part of his salary was given to him because he was and always had been a member of the Cabinet. Perhaps his noble friend took the view that the right thing would be for the Indian Government to lease the Secretary of State to the British Government, who would pay so much per week to the Government of India for the amount of work he might perform. (Laughter.) But what did the Indian taxpayer lose by the present arrangement? If it was the case that the duties which the Secretary of State for India had to perform as President of the Council would prevent him from duly discharging the duties of

Secretary of State, then he admitted that the Indian taxpayer would have a right to complain ; but if, on the other hand, he succeeded in discharging the duties of Secretary of State, in what respect could the Indian Treasury be injured ? The salary of £5,000 a year was fixed by Act of Parliament, and it was the duty of the Secretary of State for India to perform all the business of his office to the best of his ability. He had the advantage of having as a colleague in the Council Office a member of Parliament who was also in the Cabinet, and that greatly lightened his responsibility. Upon the whole, he thought that a great deal of unnecessary bother had been made about a very small matter. Although he was most anxious that no pains should be spared to guard the Indian Treasury against any unfair demands, he did not think that in this matter there was any call for interference on his part.

The EARL of NORTHBROOK said he was somewhat disappointed by the answer of the noble earl. Perhaps the question was put rather in the form of a conundrum in reference to the two offices held by the noble earl, but the reply might be almost attributed to a Minister speaking in a third capacity as a representative of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the English Government. He could not think for a moment that the noble earl as Secretary of State for India could have desired that the English Government and the English taxpayer should gain £2,000 a year by the arrangement which had been made by the noble earl occupying two offices. If the noble lord could discharge the duties of the two offices, it was quite clear the Indian Government should not pay the salary usually attached to the office of Secretary of State. Let the matter be looked at from the point of view of the Indian taxpayer. From year to year the salary of the Secretary of State for India had been increasing, because it was not paid in rupees, but was paid in sovereigns, and the same thing applied to all the home expenses of India. The sum involved in the matter raised by the question was a very small one, but still it involved the principle of dealing with the Indian taxpayer and Indian revenues in a just and equitable spirit. The arrangement was an illustration of the French proverb that those who are absent always get the worst of it. Indian finance was determined by the English Government, and, notwithstanding remonstrances made by the Indian Government, it was determined with regard to English rather than Indian interests. Indian finances are in a condition of serious, not to say alarming, embarrassment. The Indian revenues bore the whole expense of the India Office at home, and he appealed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to say whether the colonies bore any part of the expense of the Colonial Office at home. Why should the British Government pay the whole cost of the Colonial Office and the Indian Exchequer bear the whole cost of the India Office ? In this time of great difficulty and danger to Indian finance, owing to the fall in the value of the rupee in gold, these charges became of immense importance, and he wished to ask whether the Government had considered the expediency of giving any relief to India in respect of all the charges now thrown upon the revenues of India.

The MARQUIS of RIPON said the noble earl had raised a question of very great magnitude, which could scarcely be discussed upon a question like that upon the paper. He admitted that the larger question required consideration at the present time, especially owing to the depreciation of the rupee, and a

committee was sitting upon the subject to see what could be done by a general arrangement.

The EARL of NORTHBROOK asked whether the home charges were referred to the committee ?

The MARQUIS of RIPON was understood to reply in the negative. The reduction of the home charges was not a new question, and he had often wished it could be brought about. It was scarcely fair to say that the salary of the Secretary of State or the home charges had been increased because the rupee had fallen in value ; but he admitted that the loss and injury thereby sustained by India raised difficulties of a very serious kind, and constituted a just ground for giving to India every possible consideration in respect to home charges. As to the smaller point raised by the question, the customary practice had been followed, and the Secretary of State drew the salary fixed by Parliament, and gave full attention to the duties of the office.

The MARQUIS of SALISBURY said of course the amount involved in the salaries of the two offices was not one of great moment to either the English or the Indian Exchequer ; but the course which had been adopted in this instance was absolutely and entirely a new departure. He very much questioned the right to make use of an official paid by the Indian Treasury to do English work, and it was obvious that such an arrangement might be very inconveniently extended. Suppose we were dealing with some community less distant and less pacific than India, how would the matter be regarded ? It would be an admirable arrangement if the Home Secretary and the other four Secretaries of State should receive no salary from Parliament, but should always draw it from the London County Council. (A laugh.) Their lordships must not measure the financial injury by the number of thousand pounds involved. People felt the injustice keenly, and it mattered very little whether they had to pay a few thousand pounds more or less.

After a few words in reply from LORD STANLEY of ALDERLEY, the subject dropped.

MR. JUSTICE MATHEW.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON rose to ask the Lord Chancellor (1) by whose authority a Judge of the superior Courts in England could be relieved of his judicial duties in order to undertake non-judicial duties in Ireland ; (2) whether during his absence he continued to draw the salary assigned to him by Parliament for the performance of his judicial duties in England ; (3) out of what funds the expenses of the Commission presided over by Mr. Justice Mathew would be defrayed. He said he did not deny that Parliament had full power to detach Judges from their judicial functions and charge them with other duties. That was done in the case of the Corrupt Practices at Elections Act. A Commission had also been appointed by Parliament to inquire into certain charges against members of Parliament, and three Judges had been placed at the head of that Commission. The first instance in which without the authority of Parliament a Judge had been detached from his judicial duties to discharge duties which were not judicial was that of Baron Dowse, who was placed upon the Bessborough Commission. In that case he did not say that any public inconvenience was caused. But it was a very different matter when Mr. Justice Day was taken from this country over to Ireland to preside, no doubt impartially, over the Belfast Commission. Mr. Justice Mathew, without the consent of Parliament, was taken away from the duties imposed upon him by Parliament at the very beginning of the Michaelmas

Term, at a time when there was an immense amount of legal business to be got through, when the arrears were most serious, and when six Judges had to leave their judicial duties to try the numerous election petitions which had sprung out of the late Parliamentary elections. The practice of detaching Judges from their official duties, as Mr. Justice Mathew had been detached, without the sanction of Parliament, ought to be put an end to. He would like to know by whose authority Mr. Justice Mathew had been released from his judicial duties in this country and sent over the Channel to exercise non-judicial duties. There must be some authority to prevent Judges from taking whatever work fell in their way. There must be some one competent to exercise control over their movements. Was it the noble and learned lord on the woolsack or the Lord Chief Justice? Was it not possible for a Ministry who had been foisted into power by a majority of the Irish representatives, and who expressed the utmost confidence in Irishmen, to find on the Irish Bench, or at the Irish Bar, or in the ranks of the Irish civil servants a single individual competent to deal with an Irish question to be viewed from an Irish standpoint. With regard to the second point, he wished to know whether Mr. Justice Mathew during his absence on non-judicial duties in Ireland continued to receive the salary assigned to him by Parliament for the discharge of judicial duties in England. If he did, a very great hardship was inflicted upon English suitors. Every one knew that a great grievance was inflicted on suitors by delays, and that a large part of the salaries of the Judges was derived from the suitors' fees. If, therefore, a Judge devoted his time to other than judicial duties he did a wrong to the suitors. With respect to the third question, there was no doubt that the expenses of the Commission would be very heavy. He had himself been a member of more than one Royal Commission, and they had been obliged to hold their investigations in a very modest room. But in this case a house had been taken in one of the most expensive quarters in Dublin, for how long he did not know. Upon whose authority and from what funds were the expenses of this Commission to be drawn? Whether those expenses were to be sanctioned or not was not a question for their lordships' House; but he might fairly ask whether Mr. Justice Mathew had continued to receive his salary from the time he had been detached from his official duties in England.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR.—The noble lord must be aware that learned Judges placed on these Commissions have, in the discharge of their duties as Commissioners, undoubtedly, from time to time attended to the work of these Commissions, although it has to some extent interfered with the performance of the judicial functions which they would otherwise discharge. These Commissions have been appointed on the recommendation of the Ministers of the day. There has never been, so far as I know, any express authority for relieving a Judge from his judicial duties, but down to this moment it has never, so far as I am informed, happened that a Judge appointed to a Commission on the advice of the Minister of the day did not feel justified in discharging his duties as a Commissioner, even although they should interfere with his judicial duties. There are many such cases, such as the Commission for the Abolition of Purchase in the Army over which Vice-Chancellor James presided. With respect to non-judicial duties, I am not aware of any difference in this respect between a Commission of inquiry into questions affecting Ireland and a Commission appointed to inquire into

questions affecting England. Undoubtedly, in the case of the Commission over which Mr. Justice Day presided—that relating to the Belfast riots—it seems to me that Parliament assumed that there was power of appointing an English Judge on the Commission, and that he might lawfully attend to the duties of the Commission although he was an English Judge. As to the question "whether during his absence he continues to draw the salary assigned to him by Parliament for the performance of his judicial duties in England," undoubtedly he does, as have all judicial persons who from time to time have been appointed upon Royal Commissions. It is a mistake to suppose that the salary of a Judge comes out of suitors' fees. It is borne on the Consolidated Fund whether he is an English or an Irish Judge, so that as regards the taxpayer it does not make the slightest difference in the world. Then as to the question "out of what funds the expenses of the Commission presided over by Mr. Justice Mathew will be defrayed," the expenses will be paid out of a vote for temporary Commissions. I am quite alive to the inconvenience of taking a Judge away from his judicial duties to carry on a public inquiry (hear, hear) except such as concerns the administration of the law, and I hope that the occasions on which this is done will be rare. (Hear, hear.)

The House rose at 25 minutes after 5.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the woolsack at a quarter past 4 o'clock.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

The following Bills were read a second time:—Frimley and Farnborough District Water, Tranmere Dock and Railway, and Ilkley Local Board.

THE DEBTORS ACT.

The LORD CHANCELLOR rose to call attention to the subject of committals under the Debtors Act and to move for the appointment of a Select Committee. He said the law of 1869 provided that in future there should be no imprisonment for making default in the payment of sums of money with certain exceptions. He need not trouble their lordships by referring to these exceptions as they did not bear on the question. They related to such matters as fraudulent trustees and so on, and, according to the theory of the Act, imprisonment for non-payment was only to take place where that non-payment might be called fraudulent—that is, being able to pay, and ordered to pay, and refusing to pay. Obviously such a person was regarded as a fraudulent person. The number of persons committed under the Act was very large. For the year ending March 31 last the number of persons imprisoned was no less than 8,955, and of these 5,852 were imprisoned by commitments in the County Courts. The master was, therefore, one of considerable moment, inasmuch as the number sent to prison was very large. What happened was this. A debtor was ordered to pay the amount due by instalments. If an instalment was not paid inquiry was made into the means of the defaulting debtor. If it was found that he had means and did not pay he was sent to prison for a period not exceeding six weeks. It was difficult for County Court Judges to satisfy themselves clearly as to what the means of a debtor were. No doubt they made the best inquiry they could, but he thought it was absolutely certain that in many cases they did not get at the facts. Not unfrequently it happened that the debtors had not the means to pay, and they were not fraudulent in regard to the non-payment of

the debt. There could be no doubt that this power of imprisonment did result in the payment of debts which would not otherwise be paid. But this was by a man's relatives subscribing the money to save him from going to gaol. The consequence of this was that too often innocent persons were punished. He did not think there was any substantial difference of opinion among the County Court Judges—indeed, among the Judges of the superior Courts—as to the difficulty of finding out a man's means. There had been recommendations that this power in respect of imprisonment for debt should be altogether put an end to. These were matters of great controversy into which he should not enter, and he contented himself with recommending the appointment of a Select Committee to consider and advise upon the question. If they heard those who administer the law and the representatives of the working classes they would be able to collect a useful amount of information likely to guide the Legislature as to determining whether it would abolish or modify the present law. He concluded by moving that a Select Committee be appointed.

LORD ASHBOURNE said there had been a long-continued controversy on this subject, and it would be an advantage to have it inquired into by a committee, which would be able to take evidence and consider it with a view to recommending what ought to be done.

LORD MONKSWELL also supported the motion, and mentioned, as points for consideration, on which practice was divergent, regard to means of payment acquired subsequent to a committal order, and the onus of proof as to a debtor's pecuniary position, whilst he said it was also desirable that there should be statutory provision as to the temporary suspension of the execution of a writ.

The motion was then agreed to.

THE STATE OF KERRY.

The MARQUIS of LONDONDERRY said that when he last addressed their lordships he drew attention to certain occurrences in parts of Ireland, particularly in the counties of Kerry and Clare, which seemed to indicate an unsatisfactory position of affairs, especially with reference to the increase of serious crime. He was accused of credulity in assuming the accuracy of statements which appeared in daily newspapers; and therefore he proposed, when such statements appeared, to ask the Government whether they could confirm or contradict them. He therefore asked her Majesty's Government whether their attention had been drawn to a paragraph in the *Dublin Daily Express* of Thursday, February 9, which, referring to "The State of Kerry," stated that—"On Monday and Tuesday nights a number of men who were disguised with masks and sackcloth over their clothes visited the houses of several farmers in the district between Tralee and the Spa and demanded money and arms. In most instances they were successful. The gang also surrounded the car on which a clergyman was driving to visit a sick lady, but when they found who their prisoner was they ran off"; whether such paragraph was correct; and, if so, whether any person or persons have been made amenable for any or all of these outrages.

LORD ACTON.—I will endeavour, as briefly as I can, to satisfy the vigilant curiosity of the noble marquis. The information he has received touching outrages in Kerry, information which, by an interesting coincidence, appeared at the same time in several party newspapers, is, to speak with reserve, absolutely untrue. It is true that certain persons at the place and time specified did combine, did proceed from

house to house, and did carry off all the money they could obtain. These armed moonlighters, my lords, were children. They were keeping, according to local custom, a religious anniversary. (Great laughter.) Your lordships will remember, at least are aware, that the 5th of November is not kept in that part of the country; and Guy Fawkes has dropped out of the calendar. On St. Bridget's Eve the children go about in this way, singing and dancing, and collecting coppers from the neighbours. Their weapon of offence, for they have a weapon of offence, is a broomstick, which is dressed up and decorated like a doll, and is technically known as a Biddy. This is not the first time in the Session that the noble marquis, with his great opportunities and advantages in the study of Irish affairs, has challenged the Government upon them; and I almost venture to entertain a hope that it may not be the last. (Hear, hear.)

The MARQUIS of LONDONDERRY said he could not think the British public would regard the answer as altogether satisfactory. The so-called children began by disguising themselves, and so disguised made these attacks on dwelling-houses. He hoped the custom would not extend to other counties. If these were really children, and if this practice was in no way connected with the moonlighting that had gone on in Kerry, he should only be glad to have elicited that assurance.

LORD ACTON.—I regret that I forgot to say that these children dress themselves up in masquerading costume. I also did not say, as I might have done, that the whole story is a hoax.

THE CHURCH IN WALES.

The MARQUIS of SALISBURY.—It appears we must be careful in adopting what we hear and read. I have heard such strange things about what the Home Secretary has said in another place that I shall be satisfied to put the question of which I have given notice to the most rev. prelate, receiving any observations I may have to make. I ask the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury whether it is true that the Government have directed the Ecclesiastical Commission to proceed, in dealing with the four Welsh dioceses, as if the Suspensory Bill, which has been announced, had already passed into law.

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY.—The best answer I can give to the question will be to read the minute of what passed on the occasion to which the question refers. The Estates Committee of the Ecclesiastical Commission had for some time had under their consideration the desirability of forming, under their statutory powers, a new ecclesiastical district at Colwyn Bay. A church—St. Paul's, Colwyn Bay—had been built and consecrated; and the preliminary arrangements had been made some years ago by the former Bishop of St. Asaph (Bishop Hughes). The matter was to come before the board at its meeting on Thursday last, when, to quote the official minute, there was read,—"A communication from Mr. H. M. Sutl on behalf of the Lord President of the Council, forwarding copies of a letter from Mr. J. Herbert Roberts, M.P., and of a petition to her Majesty from the Rev. W. Veables Williams, the vicar of the parish of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos, in the diocese of Saint Asaph, protesting against the assignment of a separate district out of that parish to the consecrated church of St. Paul, Colwyn Bay. Mr. Roberts urges, independently of the personal considerations set forth by Mr. Williams, it would not be justifiable, in view of the Suspensory Bill relating to Wales about to be brought into Parliament, for

the Commissioners to create a new cure, and therefore a new ecclesiastical vested interest. Mr. Leveson-Gower stated that he was authorized on behalf of her Majesty's Government to deprecate, in view of contemplated legislation, the assignment of any new districts within the Welsh dioceses." This matter was taken into consideration, and after deliberation the following order was made:—"That the Lord President be informed that the objections of Mr. Venables Williams will be carefully weighed by the Commissioners before any decisive action is taken in the matter of forming the proposed district, but that the Commissioners would not feel justified in withholding their sanction to the scheme on the general ground specified by Mr. Roberts." The latter part of the foregoing resolution was not concurred in by Mr. Leveson-Gower. I will just add that this is the minute prepared for confirmation by the Board at the next meeting, that it has been shown to Mr. Leveson-Gower by the secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commission, and that Mr. Leveson-Gower acquiesces in its correctness.

The MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.—After what has been said by the most rev. prelate, I feel bound to enter the most earnest protest against the conduct of her Majesty's Government in this matter. (Cheers.) They have been guilty of a most gross and unconstitutional transgression of the powers which they hold in regard to the Ecclesiastical Commission. (Cheers.) If it had been an uncontested matter, and it was quite certain the Bill they were going to propose would pass through Parliament, it would have been at all events a very venial irregularity if they had asked the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to concur in, to co-operate with, the policy indicated by that measure. But they were perfectly aware that no such character attaches to the Suspensory measure which they propose. They were aware it was a highly controversial and as bitterly disputable a measure as it is possible to propose. (Cheers.) They had no ground for thinking that Parliament would adopt it. If they appeal to the precedent of the Irish Church, they know very well that a similar Suspensory Bill in that case was rejected by Parliament, and there is no precedent whatever for the adoption of such a Bill. I should have said that, even if Parliament had adopted it, the differences between this time and that are very wide. The Irish Church, whatever the merits of its disestablishment may be, is no precedent whatever for the four dioceses of the Province of Canterbury with which it is proposed to deal in Wales. There are many points of difference. One of them is that the Irish Church belonged to a communion differing from the belief of the large majority of the old inhabitants of the country. The dioceses of Wales hold a faith and belong to a Church which has existed, at all events, very much longer than the communion of any of those who challenge its existence. (Cheers.) There was no doubt in the case of the Irish Church that those who differed from it were in a very large majority. They were not ashamed of their religion, those who differed from the Irish Church. They did not resist the institution of a census, and we knew by the testimony of Government figures that the Roman Catholics were in a very large majority over the Church that was in communion with the Church of England. But in the case of Wales we have no knowledge of the kind. We are told by interested persons that there is a majority of Welsh Nonconformists, but decade after decade they have conscientiously shrunk from allowing that pretension to be submitted to the only test by which its veracity could be ascertained.

(Laughter.) When people perpetually make assertions of which they perpetually refuse to allow the examination and the proof, it is probable that the assertion is false. (Cheers.) But, my lords, there are other reasons which separate very much the condition of the Irish Church from that of the Welsh dioceses of the Province of Canterbury. We have lived many years since then. We know a great deal more of political science and its practice than we did in 1869. We know what the results of disestablishing a Church are. We know the gloomy series of destructive measures and proposals which in Ireland have followed the disestablishment of the Church. We know that robbery of the Church is followed by the robbery of the landlords, and by proposals for the mutilation of the State. (Cheers.) What we have learnt by experience with respect to Ireland will guide, I am strongly convinced, the action of this country with respect to Wales. Even if these things were not true, even if there were no such strong elements of difference between the two cases, even if Parliament has not rejected, as it did reject, a Suspensory Bill in the past, still it would have been a matter of common decency that a measure of this intense importance—a measure constituting an absolutely new departure from anything that has taken place in our history before—it would have been decent on the part of the Executive not to attempt, by private action or importunity or menace, anticipating a decision of the Legislature. My lords, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the new step which is taken. Mr. Gladstone has the credit of being the first Minister since the Restoration who has lifted his hand to strike down and despoil the Church of England. This is not the time to enter into the grounds of his conduct, to appreciate its character, or the fitness of the hand from which this blow is going forth. But no one can differ from me in this, that this is a turning point in our history. (Hear, hear.) It is a new departure. It is a proposal for the mutilation of an institution older than any dynasty, older than any estate in this country. It is a proposal fraught with the most tremendous results to all other ancient institutions in this land, and I repeat that it was a matter of common decency that her Majesty's Government should abstain from trying to obtain an anticipatory and preliminary approval and confirmation of this revolutionary policy by a secret action, taken, without notice and without authority, upon an ecclesiastical body over whom they have no authority whatever. (Cheers.)

The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—The noble marquis has travelled, as perhaps is natural, far beyond the question which was answered by the most rev. prelate, and has taken occasion to repeat in terms which do not err on the side of weakness the old story of the robbery of the Church and the robbery of the landlords of Ireland, while the measure now before Parliament is described as revolutionary. I will not go into the old story. I do not admit that the Church was robbed in Ireland, and I utterly deny that the landlords were robbed. (Ironical laughter.) I challenge anybody to point out wherein the condition of the Irish landlords in respect of their rents, which I suppose is the main matter they have to care for, is in any respect worse and not in many respects better than that of landlords in England. The noble marquis has referred to a measure now before the other House and concerning which I shall not be induced to say a word. With regard to the question relating to that portion of the Church of England which exists in Wales, it would be far more appropriate to discuss that important question

when the measure promised in the Queen's Speech is before your lordships. In due time and place we shall be prepared to defend the policy of that measure and our action in regard to it. I should like, however, very shortly to describe my own action in connexion with the question on the paper. That action consisted in simply sending certain communications in ordinary course to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and in reply I received the letter which has been quoted by the most rev. prelate. On receiving that letter I directed that a reply should be sent to Mr. Roberts in precisely identical terms in my capacity as President of the Council. I apprehend it was perfectly open to Mr. Leveson-Gower, as Church Estates Commissioner, to take the course which he thought fit in regard to the particular matter.

The MARQUIS OF SALISBURY was understood to say that his complaint was that Mr. Leveson-Gower spoke on behalf of the Government.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—I have not understood that there has been any general decision of her Majesty's Government that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners should be in any way prevented from exercising their discretion with regard to a matter coming before them. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners are an independent body. The Commissioners might express an opinion that one particular course would be better than another, but I am not aware of any general decision by the Government calling upon the Commissioners not to exercise the authority which they undoubtedly possess.

LORD ASHBOURNE said as he understood Mr. Leveson-Gower was the official representative of her Majesty's Government on the Board of her Majesty's Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and appeared to be speaking as the representative of her Majesty's Government. The position of the question, therefore, appeared to be this—the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, wielding their immense powers under statute, had an application made to them by her Majesty's Government that they should suspend some of their most important functions and should dare to take upon themselves a line of action grossly unconstitutional and without one atom of excuse or justification. (Hear, hear.) The Home Secretary, when asked a question in the other House that evening, stated that Mr. Leveson-Gower was proceeding upon his own initiative. But that answer was inconsistent with the statement of Mr. Leveson-Gower. Whether there was a general consensus on the part of the Government, or Mr. Leveson-Gower believed that there was, he was within his right with his ambassadorial functions when he told the Commissioners that her Majesty's Government, in view of a Suspensory Act, not introduced or printed, desired that they should suspend some of their most important functions which they were bound by statute to exercise. (Hear, hear.) He found it difficult to imagine—perhaps it was the result of his legal training—any line of conduct more grossly unconstitutional or indefensible from a legal point of view. (Hear, hear.) There was no reason whatever to suppose that a Suspensory Bill, if brought in, would go through, but it had never even come before Parliament. In 1889, when Mr. Dillwyn moved a resolution on the subject, an amendment was carried by a majority of 53 to the effect that, having regard to the great and growing influence of the Church in Wales and especially the nature of the work which it was doing in the Principality, the House was not prepared to adopt the resolution. In the debate on the subject Mr. Byron-Reed quoted from a speech of Mr. Gladstone the statement that there was complete eccl-

esiastical, constitutional, and he might add historical identity between the Church in Wales and the Church in England; that he would not say what it would be right to do provided Wales was separated from England as Ireland was, but the contrary was the case, and therefore he thought it was practically impossible to separate the case of Wales from the case of England. (Hear, hear.) All that went to weaken the suggestion that there could be any belief on the part of her Majesty's Government, when Mr. Leveson-Gower made the statement in question, that Parliament could be expected to adopt the Bill. In 1868, before the Suspensory Bill was introduced, a resolution was carried after a long debate; an address had then to be presented to the Crown, an answer was received on the 28th of May, and on the day after Mr. Gladstone, in presenting the Suspensory Bill, said that it had derived a moral force from the resolution passed a few days before. If that was so there was another link wanting in the present case. The Government seemed now to desire to repudiate Mr. Leveson-Gower, but that was a matter between Mr. Leveson-Gower and her Majesty's Government. No one who knew Mr. Leveson-Gower would believe that on a matter vitally affecting the Church he was speaking on the authority of others and not of the Government. (Hear, hear.) That was a very serious question. It was an effort made to suggest to a great Board that it was the desire of her Majesty's Government that they should, without law and in anticipation of what might become law, apply some sort of undermining to a Church which was part of the Church of England. That was, in effect, to apply a dispensing power which was revolting to the whole spirit of our laws. (Hear, hear.) But it was not the only instance. When in Ireland it came into the mind of the Government to make the instructions to the sheriff more intelligible and to substitute for his discretion something else, that was applying a dispensing power. No effort had been made openly to throw over Mr. Leveson-Gower. The noble earl, using cautious words, only said he was not aware of any general decision of the Government as to the policy to be adopted on this question.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said that what he did state was that no general decision had been arrived at as to requesting the Ecclesiastical Commissioners not to exercise the power which they possessed.

LORD ASHBOURNE said that Mr. Leveson-Gower then must have been instructed before the Cabinet had arrived at its general decision, because he conveyed to the Commissioners that he was only the mouthpiece of the Government in what he did say. (Hear, hear.) The position was not satisfactory, and he hoped that a more satisfactory explanation would be forthcoming before this controversy closed. (Hear, hear.)

The LORD CHANCELLOR demurred to the suggestion that the Church Estates Commissioner was to be viewed as a representative of the Government in the Ecclesiastical Commission. Personally he believed that he had the honour to be a member of the Ecclesiastical Commission, and, as he understood the case, the Church Estates Commissioner appointed by the Government had no more *status*, power, or authority than any other individual of the Commission. In considering the point raised with regard to the constitutional question, it was necessary to see what was the nature of the constitution of the Ecclesiastical Commission. This Commission was an absolutely independent body and the Government of the day had not the slightest power over it. Any representation made to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners by the

Government of the day would no doubt receive as much consideration and attention as the Commissioners chose to give it, and if the Commissioners thought it a reasonable representation and one to be acted upon they would no doubt approve it; but, if they thought that the contrary was the case, undoubtedly the Commissioners would not act upon it. The strong language which had been used, therefore, appeared to be out of place when the relations of the Government and the Ecclesiastical Commission were borne in mind. Supposing the Government of the day thought it was desirable, in view of what might take place, that the Ecclesiastical Commission should not commit itself to a particular course, the Commissioners would be entitled either to reject or act upon the recommendation. Where, then, was the unconstitutional act, or the violation of the law? The Commissioners were just as independent in this matter of the Government as the Government were of them.

LORD NORTON said the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were an independent body for one special purpose, but that in this instance they had been asked by the Government to depart from that purpose in order to facilitate the disestablishment of the Welsh Church. They had been made a kind of cat's-paw in the furthering of a measure which it was known the Government had in contemplation.

The House rose at 20 minutes to 6 o'clock.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the wool-sack at a quarter-past 4 o'clock.

NEW PEER.

LORD STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL took his seat in succession to his brother, deceased.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

The following Bills were read a second time:—Birmingham Canal Bill, East and West India Dock Bill, Great Eastern Railway (Cambridge New Line, &c.) Bill, Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill, Imperial Continental Gas Association Bill, Manchester Ship Canal (Additional Capital, &c.) Bill, New Swindon Gas Bill, Scottish Provident Institution Bill, Crystal Palace District Gas Bill, General Life and Fire Assurance Company Bill, Dublin Distillers Company Bill.

THE LAND QUESTION IN WALES.

THE EARL of DUNRAVEN asked the Lord President of the Council to lay upon the table of the House, or otherwise to inform the House as to, the evidence upon which her Majesty's Government decided to recommend the issue of a Royal Commission to examine into the land question in Wales. He thought that the issue of a Royal Commission to inquire into the land question in any part of the United Kingdom was a matter concerning which Parliament ought to be informed. At present Parliament was, especially as far as this House was concerned, in a condition of utter darkness as to the objects, nature, and scope of the proposed inquiry. It was also in total ignorance on a most vital point. No knowledge whatever was forthcoming concerning the reasons which had actuated her Majesty's Government, nor of the necessity for or the justification of such an inquiry. It would not be gainsaid that Royal Commissions never ought to issue without sufficient cause shewu. As a general rule a Royal Commission was granted after an inquiry had been demanded and a cause for inquiry shown in Parliament. Of course there were exceptions. A Government might be perfectly justified in recommending a Royal Commission purely on its own

initiative, as, for instance, the Labour Commission. But as a rule Royal Commissions followed upon motions made and sustained in Parliament. The present case differed, however, very widely from the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the labour question. In that case no reasonable man would deny that a case for inquiry existed. In this case no reasonable man, as far as he was aware, had asserted that any case for inquiry existed, and certainly no sufficient proof had been adduced. He ventured to ask the other day one or two very simple questions to which he thought direct and simple answers might have been returned, but he received no reply. He asked what was the land question in Wales; in what way the land question in Wales, whatever it was, differed from the land question in England, whatever that might be. He was quite at a loss to understand the meaning of this distinction between England and Wales in respect of anything that could be called a land question. The system of tenure generally and the system of management generally were identical in England and Wales. There might be differences in detail, differences of local colour, in Wales as there were in England; but in such variations some parts of Wales resembled parts of England, and some parts of England resembled parts of Wales. There were no peculiarities in Wales, taken as a whole, which differentiated it in any way from England. There was no absolute homogeneity in Wales in respect of custom or estate management, neither was there in England. Counties and districts differed from each other slightly in England and in Wales in matters of detail, but certainly no difference whatever existed between England taken as a whole and Wales taken as a whole that could in any way justify an inquiry in Wales which was not equally justifiable in other portions of Great Britain. He commended this to the notice of noble lords who were interested in land in England and Scotland. Of this they might be sure—that if any solid reason, any reason other than mere political motive, existed for an inquiry of this nature in Wales it existed with equal force with reference to the greater part of Scotland and England. It was absolutely impossible to draw any distinct line, to invent any zone of demarcation, separating Wales from the rest of Great Britain in this respect. What was the object of attempting thus to create a spurious difference, to manufacture a distinction which did not naturally exist? What was the intention of the Government in thus drawing invidious and imaginary distinctions between the Principality and the rest of the kingdom? The Government were engaged upon one operation involving dismemberment of the United Kingdom; was not that sufficient for them? Had they not better wait until they had brought that to a satisfactory conclusion before sharpening their knives for another operation? To an inquiry into land tenure generally he saw no great objection. It would be purely academic, but it would be interesting to investigate the various systems in vogue in different countries and their results and effects. What he so much objected to was this attempt to discriminate where no ground for discrimination existed, and where the attempt to create differences and arouse antagonism must produce evil results. (Hear, hear.) What, then, was this land question in Wales, and in what respect was it different from the land question in England? He was not asking for information which he could have obtained for himself. He had looked and searched in vain for any justification for the issue of this Royal Commission. He turned to the natural fountain-head of information—the Prime

Minister—and he got but little satisfaction there. (Laughter.) On the 31st of last month the Prime Minister said in his place in Parliament:—"It is the intention of the Government, proceeding partly from recollection of debates in this House during last Session, and in no small part of what has taken place in Wales during the recess, to issue a Royal Commission for the purpose of examining into the land question in Wales." The action of the Government appeared to be founded on two things—recollection of debates in the House of Commons, and something or other that had taken place in Wales. The debate alluded to was a debate on a motion for the second reading of a Bill to create an admirably absurd land system in Wales consisting of the three F's and several other things. If her Majesty's Government had come to this determination from recollection of that debate their memory must be of a very defective character. No reasonable and responsible person could find in that debate any ground whatever for instituting an inquiry which, if it was not needed to prepare the way for the remedy of serious grievances, was calculated to do an infinity of harm. Nothing tangible came out in that debate except, perhaps, that certain tenant-farmers who had entered into contracts to pay tithes had been evicted because they broke their contracts. Without going into the rights and wrongs of that matter, and whether people were thus justified in refusing to fulfil contracts they had entered into, it was sufficient to say that it could not occur again. The dissimilarity of language and religion between the majority of landowners and the majority of tenants was mentioned; but the doctrine that religious opinions carried disabilities and that ethnological variations affected the security of property sounded strange at the present day. Every particle of evidence which could be found in that debate was fully answered beforehand in the report of the Royal Commission presided over by the Duke of Richmond. It would be merely to insult the intelligence of the noble lords opposite to suppose for a moment that as responsible politicians and as her Majesty's advisers they could find an inquiry of this nature on anything that occurred in that debate. Then as to the other reason—the something that had taken place in Wales. What had taken place in Wales? Nothing that he was aware of, except that the equilibrium of the Principality might have been slightly disturbed by some rather ill-advised speeches of the Prime Minister. In one of those speeches he stated that, partly from the investigation of public and authentic returns, he had found things that caused him both surprise and pain. From reference to the income-tax returns the right hon. gentleman came to the conclusion that rents had not been reduced in Wales to the extent that they had been in England. The whole matter narrowed itself down to a rent question, then. He was not going into a critical examination of the figures. The falsity of deductions made from them was proved by the falsity of the figures which had been amply proved over and over again since Mr. Gladstone spoke. The untrustworthiness of such evidence was amply proved by the fact that it appeared on examination of income-tax returns that the valuation of land in Ireland was practically the same for the year 1889-90 as it was in the year 1879-80, whereas every human being knew perfectly well that rents had largely decreased. It would be easy to point out the great variation of value of land in different counties in Wales and England, easy to show how a general average was affected by local peculiarities. The sweeping assertion that rent had fallen only 7 per cent. in Wales as against 24

per cent. in England was based on figures which equally proved that for the last 10 years rents had not fallen in Ireland at all; and that reduced the argument to an absurdity. (Hear, hear.) He imputed no improper motive to the Prime Minister in making these hasty and misleading statements. He then occupied a position of partial irresponsibility. Although in office, he had scarcely felt the salutary effect of his responsible position. The Prime Minister was excited by success, and in an unguarded moment he might quote hastily from unreliable figures and so make a popular statement in an out-of-door speech. But the deliberate decision of a Government after six months of office was a very different matter from a speech delivered at a kind of picnic on the crags of Snowden. It was impossible to conceive that the Government could really come to the conclusion that a Royal Commission was necessary on account of the alleged differences in reductions of rent founded upon figures which they knew were perfectly unreliable in such a case. But, if they did so, the theory that was involved was simply this—that it was part of the functions of a Prime Minister or of the Executive Government to decide between man and man as to the management of their business within the law; to decide whether A has been as liberal as B in matters of rent reduction. Such a theory could not be confined to agricultural rents. If they were within the functions of a Government to investigate the wages paid by different individuals or firms; to investigate the prices charged by different firms, shopkeepers, or individuals. It was claiming a right of interference on the part of the Executive that went to the root of our whole social structure, and would revolutionize it. As applied to land it simply meant that it might be held and occupied, not in fee simple, not by contract or by custom, or by any known form of tenure, but at the goodwill and pleasure of the Minister and Government of the day. That was all that appeared on the surface to have occurred in Wales. Had anything else occurred? What was the matter with the Principality? Were her Majesty's Government dissatisfied with the political condition of gallant little Wales? Wales returned them 31 members in the last general election, and only three members pledged to the Union. The vote east for the Union was more than half the vote east for separation. Say, in round numbers, that the Gladstonian vote was in the proportion of two to one of the Unionist vote; but the representation was in the proportion of nine to one. Something must be going wrong. Was the Nonconformist conscience beginning to quicken? Was Wales becoming wobbly in her allegiance? Were the Bills for maiming the Church and disabling religion not sufficient to hold the party together? There had been certain ominous grumblings, certain rumours of dissatisfaction. For instance, at a meeting of the North Wales Liberation Federation on Saturday it was decided to call upon the Welsh members to withdraw their support to the Home Rule Bill if their wishes in other respects were not more promptly attended to. They support the Home Rule Bill in consideration of disestablishment; but, if the Home Rule Bill becomes law, there is no possibility whatever of realizing the promises of disestablishment and disendowment. Wales will have performed her part of the bargain and must infallibly be done out of the reward. Welsh members vote for Home Rule, for which they care nothing, because they are promised disestablishment; but they have at length discovered that, unless the Irish members remain in full force

at Westminster and vote on purely British subjects, the British Church cannot be disestablished in Wales. Had it become necessary to dangle another and more succulent carrot in the shape of land legislation before the patient animal that had blindly followed for so long? (Hear, hear.) In the absence of any better evidence it was impossible to avoid the conclusion that political motives and the desire to make political capital were the true origin and reason of this Commission to inquire into the land question in Wales. A commission of inquiry into a matter of this kind was no light matter. It was treated as of little consequence the other day in this House by Lord Monkswell, who entertained an idea of the supernatural wisdom and beneficence of Royal Commissions more creditable to his heart than to his head. He did not share this belief in Royal Commissions at all times and under any Government. When not required, when not justified, when set on foot to curry cheap popularity, they might do great harm. We had had strange experiences of late years. Noble lords opposite should really try and realize that since they took to bad company and evil ways their political morals had terribly deteriorated. (A laugh.) We had had a rather curious experience of a Royal, or Viceregal, Commission quite lately. We had also seen a most unconstitutional and despotic attempt at interference by the Government with the freedom of action of an important public body in respect of its statutory rights. It was said of Irish landlords that they had been put upon their trial and acquitted, but the verdict of not guilty had proved equivalent to a sentence of death to a great many of them. A Royal Commission reported that rents were not excessive in Ireland, and we know what happened after that. He demanded full information as to the reason for this inquiry in justice to owners of land in Wales. It was no part of the functions of the Executive to interfere with private rights without the strongest evidence of the absolute necessity of doing so. What business had the Government to interfere with the liberty and rights of owners of land in Wales? None whatever. They might with equal justification appoint a Commission to investigate the land question in any particular county in England or to inquire into the way in which any millowner, or brewer, or manufacturer managed his private affairs. He deprecated this inquiry because he did not wish to see the good relations that now existed disturbed. Were they too good to be satisfactory to the party opposite, that was so fond of creating class animosities and hatreds? The position of the landowners was analogous to that of a man committed for trial. He had a right to know the nature of the evidence produced before the magisterial inquiry that must have taken place before the Government determined upon recommending the issue of this Commission. The noble lord opposite, Lord Monkswell, wondered that Welsh landowners of this House did not welcome this inquiry. They had got, however, to think not only of the larger landlords, who could take pretty good care of themselves, but of the great number of small freeholders in Wales. The Government professed to advocate small freeholds, and to regret that the yeoman class tended so much to disappear, and they were adopting a course which must have the very strongest deterrent effect upon men anxious to invest in small properties in land, and which could not fail to seriously harass and embarrass the class of small freeholders. He objected, too, on the still larger ground of the injury that would be done to the whole industry of the country. He objected to the unwholesome system of worrying

and harassing trade which was so dear to noble lords opposite. They might go into this inquiry with a light heart, but they would, perhaps, come out of it with a heavy one. It would not be the first time in their history that they had disgusted and wearied the country by harassing trades, by worrying industries, and by disturbing individuals in the lawful prosecution of their business. (Hear, hear.) Unless supported by the clear justification of facts the proposed inquiry constituted a mere wanton attack upon property, and would react injuriously upon every trade and upon every industry and handicraft that employs and supports the wage-earning population of the country. (Cheers.)

The EARL of KIMBERLEY said the noble earl had traversed an enormous amount of ground, and he certainly should not attempt to follow him. He was very much obliged to his noble friend for the lecture he had read the Government. He did not altogether accept his description of the Liberal party. He said their morality was getting worse and worse.

The EARL of DUNRAVEN.—Your political morality. The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—Oh, yes; I assume that, of course. (Laughter.) The demand of the noble earl was rather puzzling, because he seemed to hold the opinion that before a Royal Commission was issued there ought to be a preliminary inquiry. He never heard before of any Government making any inquiry before issuing a Commission for another inquiry. That was an entirely new doctrine. The noble earl further said that when a case was made out in Parliament it was the practice sometimes to issue a Royal Commission. Well, the Government thought a case was made out in Parliament. The noble earl referred to the debate which took place last year upon a Bill brought in by Mr. Ellis, and said he would not insult the intelligence of the Government by supposing that anything said in that debate could have led them to the conclusion that a Commission ought to issue. For his own part, he had not yet arrived at the point of rating his own intelligence higher than that of the Prime Minister, but, at all events, to the no doubt unpractised intelligence of his right hon. friend the matter presented itself in a different way, for in the course of that debate the Prime Minister said "a case had been made out for a thorough, searching, impartial, and dispassionate inquiry." It was a well-known fact, moreover, that of the members returned for the Principality all except three were supporters of her Majesty's Government, and they all agreed that such an inquiry was desirable. By what better means could a Government ascertain whether there was a demand for an inquiry in any part of the kingdom than by the opinion of the members? The Welsh members, no doubt, reflected the opinion of their constituencies in this matter, and hence it seemed to him a *prima facie* case for inquiry had been established. If the grounds for the demand were imaginary, surely the sooner they were proved to be imaginary the better; if, on the other hand, it turned out there were substantial grievances, those grievances ought to be redressed. The Prime Minister, in the debate referred to, guarded himself most carefully against its being supposed that he had come to the conclusion that legislation was necessary; all he said was that a *prima facie* case had been made out, and that there ought to be an inquiry. That being so, it was the plain duty of the Government to grant an inquiry.

LORD STANLEY of ALDERLEY denied that a *prima facie* case had been made out. The country, he said, had lost confidence in the impartiality of the Government since the ill-starred Mathew's Commiss-

from into the case of the evicted tenants in Ireland. That was not a Royal Commission of inquiry, but a packed Commission. Out of six Commissioners there was not one to represent the landlords.

The MARQUIS of SALISBURY.—The noble earl in his speech led the House to understand that if there was a majority of Welsh members in favour of an inquiry an inquiry should be held. Yes, if we were agreed as to the principles upon which that inquiry should be held. If it were merely inquisitive in its character, such as the inquiry into the hospitals proposed by a noble lord some time since, I should have nothing to say against it. But, taken in connexion with what has fallen from the Prime Minister, this would be an inquiry whether the landlords of Wales have reduced their rents as much as the right hon. gentleman thinks desirable. I do not think that it would be a legitimate use of the powers of Parliament to interfere in this way and to insist upon something like the three F's to remedy any evils that may exist. Is it the opinion of the noble earl that such a measure as the three F's should be introduced into Wales? He must bear in mind that the case of Wales and that of England are absolutely on all fours. (Hear, hear.) Anything done in Wales must be done in England. No doubt in Ireland there was a very peculiar case, owing to that strong Ulster custom which it was impossible to disregard. I remember hearing the Duke of Argyll argue in this House that, though the Ulster custom was confined to the province of Ulster, yet the spirit which it indicated was spread all over Ireland, and all over Ireland you found tenures similar in their nature to that of Ulster. That was a plausible argument, and it does separate very strongly the case of Ireland from that of England and Wales. But when we hear now, for the first time, that the Welsh landlords are to be remitted to this revolutionary tribunal, with the probability of their being condemned on the ground that the remissions of their rents are not sufficient, then I think the noble earl should bear in mind what the problem is which he undertakes to solve and count the cost before he takes in hand so great an enterprise. (Hear.) I was a little alarmed the other night when I heard the noble earl maintain that the Irish landlords had suffered no wrong, because the rents were not reduced any more in Ireland than they were in England. It appears to have been his impression that if you retain for the landlord such rent as you think he is entitled to you may deprive him absolutely of the mastery and ownership of his land without doing him any wrong whatever. The great grievance of the Irish landlords is that most of them think they have been reduced below the level of the owners of property. When they have been deprived of the mastership and ownership of their land they are brought down to the position of mortgagees with a shifting mortgage reducible by agitation. (Hear, hear.) That is the feeling of the Irish landlords, and if the noble earl disputes that they suffer, I would ask him to try the matter in his own mind by this simple test. Forty years ago Parliament called upon the small capitalists of this country to buy Irish land which the Government offered in large quantities. They dwelt in public advertisements upon the advantages it would bring to the purchasers and the rents that might be expected. Suppose by an operation of second sight you could tell what the tenure of land was likely to become under Mr. Gladstone's administration, do you suppose that a single one of those purchasers would be insane enough to risk his money? (Hear, hear.) Therefore I hope that the noble earl

and other noble lords when they come to advise the Cabinet will not for a moment believe that Welsh and English landlords will accept this doctrine, and submit to part with the mastery of their land. If any such measure is proposed, I can assure him that it will be no small resistance which he will meet—no small resistance in the passing of the measure, and no small resistance if that measure should pass. The landlords of this country I am sure will do their utmost to prevent any such legislation, and I would impress upon the noble lord that it is not in the landlords' interests only or mainly that I am speaking. They might suffer very much, but during the conflict attending any such threatened legislation—for it is a contest that must last for many years—they would do all in their power to defend themselves. Therefore I would advise the noble lord to consider well what may be the consequences of the conflict upon which he would enter. I am bringing these considerations before his mind, not because I wish to anticipate the results of the inquiry, but because I demur *ab initio* to the claim that Parliament has a right to interfere, if it does interfere, between the contracts of landlord and tenant, or has a right to say how much rent the tenant shall offer or a landlord receive. These are questions with which Parliament has no right to interfere. If it threatens to interfere it will strike a fatal blow at confidence, and will disorganize not only the industry of agriculture but all the industries which depend for their existence upon the maintenance of private rights and the stability of the law.

The House rose at half-past 5 o'clock.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17.

The LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the wool-sack at a quarter past 4 o'clock.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

The following Bills were read a second time:—Accrington Gas and Water Bill; Wolverhampton Gas Bill; Belfast Street Tramways Bill; Brighton, Rottingdean, and Newhaven Direct Railway (Extension of Time) Bill; Cheadle Railway, Mineral, and Land Company (Extension of Time) Bill; Lancashire, Derbyshire, and East Coast Railway Bill; Rhondda and Swansea Bay Railway Bill.

NEW PEER.

The MARQUIS of DOWNSHIRE took his seat on coming of age.

THE SHAN STATES FRONTIERS.

LORD LAMINGTON asked the Secretary of State for India whether a settlement of the frontiers between the Northern Shan States and Siam had been arrived at; and whether his attention had been directed to the statement made by M. Delcassé, the Under-Secretary of State for the French Colonies, in the Chamber of Deputies, that the French Government claimed the Mekong river as the western boundary to their Indo-China possessions. He maintained that if the Government had decided not to accept the responsibility of government in this district the country was entitled to know what the reason was for refusing to extend their protection over that district. A large section of the mercantile community was interested in the question, and he was anxious to see all causes of friction and trouble removed between this country and France when they came to be our neighbours on the eastern frontier of our Indian Empire.

The EARL of KIMBERLEY hoped that the noble lord would forgive him if he did not follow him into

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a general discussion of the question. He would content himself with answering the question and by saying that a general agreement had been arrived at with Siam as to the frontier between Siam and the Northern Shan States, and the demarcation of the frontier was at present actually being carried out by an Anglo-Siamese Commission. A noble lord asked a question of which he had not given notice with regard to a Shaa State which he named. Not having had the advantage of visiting those countries, although he had carefully studied the maps, he felt the difficulty of distinguishing between States whose names were so much alike ; but he concluded that the noble lord referred to a State contiguous to Siam. That State was to be ceded to Siam, and on the other hand Siam had made important concessions to us. It would be inconvenient that he should go into the reasons for the arrangements that had been made ; but in due time the papers would be laid before the House, and then their lordships would see the general grounds on which a settlement had been arrived at that he believed was advantageous to us. He had read the speech of M. Delcassé in the French Chamber ; but it would not be convenient that he should discuss in that House the report of proceedings in the French Chamber.

LORD LAMINGTON asked whether no notice was to be taken of such a declaration of policy.

THE EARL of ROSEBERY.—I think the noble lord is not quite correct in the interpretation he puts upon the statement to which he alludes. The French Minister did not go quite so far as to claim the Mekoong river as the western boundary to the French Indo-China possessions, but he rather spoke of it as the western limit of their sphere of influence. It is not for me to judge what the French view of their sphere of influence may be, but no such sphere of influence has been recognized by her Majesty's Government.

APPOINTMENT OF COLONIAL GOVERNORS.

The EARL of ONSLOW rose to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it was true that an assurance had been given to the Premier of New South Wales that his Cabinet would be consulted as to the appointment of her Majesty's representative in that colony. He said that anyone who had resided in the Australian colonies would know that public opinion was unduly excited against the Imperial Government by telegrams which were sent through, without qualification, for the sake of brevity, and without investigation, owing to the competition for priority. A telegram which appeared in *The Times* of Wednesday was so pre-

cise and specific as to suggest that it must have at least some foundation in truth. It stated that in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales Sir George Dibbs declared that he was in a position to say that no Governor would be appointed until his name had been submitted for the approval of the Cabinet of New South Wales. He could not help feeling that that statement must have been made under some misapprehension, and such misapprehensions were by no means new. On the occasion of a former appointment a similar misapprehension caused some embarrassment. He hoped the noble marquis would be able to say that no name would be communicated to a colony before it had been submitted to her Majesty, this being the rule that had been acted upon by several Governments and had been laid down in a despatch by the late Secretary of State.

The MARQUIS of RIPON.—With the noble earl I feel sure there must be some misapprehension in regard to the matter, as the statement in the telegram which has led to this question is not correct. No change has been made, or is contemplated, in the practice (which will be found detailed in Parliamentary paper C 5,828) pursued by former Governments in regard to the appointment of colonial Governors. At the same time, I shall always endeavour to secure that the Governor and the Government of the colony should be informed, as a matter of courtesy, of the selection approved by the Queen before any announcement is made in the Press.

THE NEW ZEALAND LEGISLATURE.

The EARL of ONSLOW asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether he could inform the House of the number of measures introduced by the Government of New Zealand which were rejected by the Legislative Council last Session ; (2) upon how many occasions the Government suffered defeat on the divisions taken, and upon how many occasions those decisions would have been reversed if the Government had been reinforced by the votes of the 12 Legislative Councillors which the Governor had since been instructed by the Secretary of State to appoint on the advice of Ministers ; and (3) whether he would lay upon the table of the House the papers relating to those appointments.

The MARQUIS of RIPON said the information would be granted as an unopposed return if it were moved for.

The EARL of ONSLOW moved accordingly, and the motion was agreed to.

The House rose at five minutes to 5 o'clock.

[The Addendum will be repeated in the next number, and therefore should not be bound with the volume.]

years we had sent 1,100,000 British and Irish emigrants to the United States ; it was therefore worth consideration what might be the effect of any restrictive legislation on our part. No doubt there was in this country a good deal of cruelty amounting to white slavery ; and we ought to do what we could to put it down. There might be restrictive legislation in the United States, but Mr. Arnold White's book showed that it was only put into force against immigrants of exceptional poverty or physical debility. The number of Russo-Polish immigrants received by the United States in the last ten years had been 422,664. Even Mr. Arnold White, who was one of the strongest advocates of restriction, said that further inquiry was needed, because the House of Commons' Committee had touched only the fringe of the subject, while the Lords' Committee on Sweating ended in a wrangle on the Jewish question which had nothing to do with the matter. Immediately he took office at the Board of Trade he got together all the information he could bearing upon the economic effects of alien immigration, and he had sent a competent commissioner to the United States to make special inquiries there. If the right hon. gentleman chose to move for a committee, all the available information should be laid before it, for certainly it was a question on which the House ought not to legislate without the fullest knowledge. (Cheers.)

SIR H. HOWORTH said he rose to support the amendment and to oppose the dilatory tactics of the Prime Minister. Two committees had sat for a long time, and the House had been promised that the results should be embodied in a Bill. Why was another committee to be appointed ? Because, as the leader of the House had said, he wanted a definition of a destitute alien. That definition they had already ; it was contained in the Statute-book of the United States, and had been made on the most sensible lines by the Jewish committees in London and Manchester. In Manchester and Salford the Jewish committees had refused to assist the Jews coming into this country until they had been resident in it for six months, and he was told that the very same regulation was applied in London, so all they had to do was to impose by law such a restriction as would prevent those poor Jews from coming into this country. The right hon. gentleman wanted statistics to show the number of Englishmen who, in consequence of the immigration of these poor Jews, had applied for relief from the rates. It was impossible to obtain that information. The poor Jews who came to this country were not chargeable to the rates because the Jewish community supported them. But in that way a bonus was offered them to undersell the English workman by accepting lower wages. (Hear, hear.) That was a serious matter in another way, because unless the thing was stopped, or something was done to restrain it, a strong and bitter feeling would be excited in the towns where this unfair competition was carried on, as it had been in some Continental capitals, against the Jew as a Jew, which was the last thing he would wish to see. (Hear, hear.) Therefore the Jewish committees in Manchester and London were acting rightly in making it a rule that no Jew should be assisted who was not resident six months.

SIR J. GOLDSMID.—The hon. member is absolutely wrong. We have no such rule in London.

SIR H. HOWORTH.—Well, then, there ought to be such a rule in London. (A laugh.) The wealthy Jews who knew the state of the labour market ought to refuse charity to those victims of tyranny because there was no room for them in this country. A good

deal had been said about the shameless cruelty which had driven those men to our shores. It was true that they had been treated with shameless cruelty, but the remedy was not to hold out inducements to them to come to this country, but to make representations in the proper quarter—Russia itself. (Cries of "Divide.") He did not want to detain the House, but he wanted to impress upon it that in all parts of the North they had great numbers of the unemployed, and that the policy which he advocated would be shortly pressed upon them by those who knew that in certain parts of our great towns, which were congested beyond anything known before, wages were lowered and kept down in consequence of the unfair competition of Jews who were receiving gratuities from their richer neighbours. That state of things cried aloud for legislation.

BARON F. DE ROTHSCHILD said that as he trespassed on the House so seldom he trusted that on this occasion it would grant him its indulgence. The right hon. gentleman the member for the Brightside Division and the Prime Minister had made speeches so forcible, so comprehensive and conclusive, that it seemed to him that even if he were possessed of more eloquence he could hardly add anything to what they had said. But since the Prime Minister and the right hon. gentleman had spoken other speeches had been made which might obscure the intelligence of some hon. members who had lately come into the House. The right hon. gentleman in his amendment had put forth certain statements which were based upon no figures. However much statistics might be quoted, he was confident that there was no warrant for the assertion that the immigration into this country continued unabated. He hoped the proposed inquiry would be of a most comprehensive character, and would include every trade with which it was said the immigrants competed. Reference had been made to injury caused to certain trades, and particularly the tailors and boot-makers, by pauper aliens, but the clothes and boots made by these people did not compete with native industry, being of very cheap quality not made by English artisans, and manufactured chiefly for exportation. The half of the town of Chesham, in his constituency, lived by the manufacture of boots and shoes, and there was not a single pauper alien in it, nor had there ever been. The immigration from Russia was diminishing, owing to the efforts of his co-religionists to deter the persecuted people from coming to this country. These wretched co-religionists of his enlisted his deepest sympathy from the cruel and abominable persecution they had suffered—persecution which had never been equalled in Europe since the dark days of the Middle Ages. (Cheers.) He appealed to members of this House not to shut their ears and hearts to the victims of such persecution. This country had been for centuries the asylum for refugees from other lands for the poor, the needy, and the destitute, and surely at the end of this enlightened century its doors would not be closed to members of his unfortunate race, exiles mainly from Russia, who, moreover, only came to this country as a halting-place whence they might wend their way across the ocean and find a permanent home in America. (Cheers.)

MR. MONTAGU believed that Whitechapel, which included Spitalfields, was the only district seriously affected by the foreign immigration, and yet no expression of opinion on this amendment had reached him from any section of his constituents. He had a very extensive knowledge of these Russian and

Polish Jews. He saw many thousands of them leave the Russian frontier in 1882, when they escaped from tyranny, in many cases robbed even of their clothea by the professed protectors of property, the Russian soldiers. He went on behalf of the Mansion-house Jews' Committee to found an emigration society which sent many thousands of these creatures direct to America. In 1884 he visited the Russo-Jewish settlers in America, and they had recently received information that they were in a prosperous and flourishing condition. In 1886 he visited various classes of Jews in numerous Polish and Russian towns, and on that occasion he was expelled from Moscow solely on account of his religious faith. He had not applied to the Foreign Office to claim redress for the insult offered to him and indirectly to the House, because the Jews of Moscow entreated him not to do so, as the officials were at that time not actively unfavourable to them. Since 1886 he had been in constant communication with the foreigners in the East-end of London, and he could testify that, as a rule, they were fairly independent and extremely industrious and sober. (Cries of "Divide.") The alien immigrants, although often poor, could not be called paupers, for they did not come upon the rates. It was said that they were a cause of the pauperism of the native workers, but during the last ten years and until quite recently pauperism had been steadily decreasing, and according to Mr. Charles Booth, the depth of poverty in Whitechapel, where the foreigners were most numerous, was not so great as in Southwark and other places across the river, where they were few. These foreigners had, moreover, dislodged many of the criminal classes. He would welcome any wise measure for their migration or emigration, or for diverting the stream from this country should it be found necessary. Immigrants were not required to stay here six months before they received assistance to go abroad; they passed through this country because it was the cheapest and best route to America. The total number of immigrants in Whitechapel was 70,000. He hoped there would be a prompt Government inquiry, but he thought that at the present time there was no need for the resolution, which might cause reprisals. (Cries of "Divide.") He left the matter with confidence in the hands of the Government.

Mr. LABOUCHERE, who rose amid loud cries of "Divide," said he regarded the amendment as a desire merely to obtain the opinion of the House upon a non-political question. The matter had been prejudiced by the introduction of the Jews, but he considered the question was a trade and not a religious one. Whether these aliens came with a copy of the Koran, the Talmud, or the Thirty-nine Articles in their pockets, he thought their room was better than their company. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) This question seriously concerned his constituents, as would be seen by the following letter, which he had received from the secretary of the Shoemaker's Trade Union:—

"These aliens have been landing in large numbers during the last eight years, and they all flock into the tailoring and shoemaking and kindred trades, where the work is done at the homes. They work 17 to 20 hours, sleep in gangs like pigs, and work at any price. In fact, it has cost us thousands and thousands of pounds to try and maintain wages against their repeated offers to do it for less. What is the result? Last winter thousands of Englishmen were walking about starving, whilst these men had the work. Now that the East-end is full of them, they are spreading into the provinces. I will illustrate what they have

done for us at Manchester. Five years ago, we put in a statement to the whole of the employers, so that all paid alike for the same classes of work. On that statement there are items of 4s. 6d. for certain work. The aliens have taken it at 4s., 3s. 9d., 3s. 6d., 3s. Until this winter we spent several hundred pounds in resisting their taking it at 2s. 9d. I could multiply this instance by hundreds of others. They simply stultify what we do, and unless our men take the work at as cheap rates, these people have the work to themselves. Our Manchester secretary has lived in his house 20 years. When he went net an alien was in the street, now he is the only one who is not an alien. And it is the same story at Leeds and elsewhere."

The President of the Board of Trade had stated that there had already been an inquiry, but what he wanted was action instead of further inquiry. If the right hon. member for Thanet went to a division he should follow his own views and those of the entire body of his constituents and vote with him. (Cheers.)

Mr. CREMER, who also rose amid loud cries of "Divide," asked the hon. member for Northampton for the name of the writer of the letter and the date when it was written.

Mr. LABOUCHERE.—Mr. Inskip is the name of the writer, and the letter was written three days ago.

Mr. CREMER said his object in asking the question was that his constituency contained a larger number of shoemakers than that of the hon. member. During the recent contest no question had been addressed to him on the subject of pauper immigration at any of the meetings he held, although his constituents were largely affected by the question. If the men who were said to be so vitally affected by pauper immigration had not raised their voices against it, he concluded that, after all, they were inclined to assent to the course which her Majesty's Government had that day approved. ("Hear, hear," and cries of "Divide.") He sat on the committee of the House which inquired into the effect produced upon the industrial classes in London, Northampton, and Leeds by this pauper immigration, and he was bound to say that the evidence given was of the loosest possible kind. No reliable statistics were laid before the committee which enabled them to come to any satisfactory conclusion. The committee, however, made a series of recommendations, one of which, he believed, had since been acted upon—that statistics on the question should be furnished to the working classes and to the House. But the information available was still incomplete; further inquiry was absolutely necessary, and as that further inquiry was suggested by the course the Government were prepared to take, he should support them with his vote. (Cheers.)

The House then divided and the numbers were—

For the amendment	...	...	...	119
Against	...	...	...	234
Majority	...	...	...	—115

The announcement of the numbers was received with cheers and counter-cheers.

Mr. A. C. MORTON, in whose name the following amendment stood upon the paper—"And this House humbly prays your Majesty to be graciously pleased to exercise your right of appointing justices of the peace in counties without the intervention of lord lieutenants," said that at that late hour in the day he did not propose to move this amendment. (Hear, hear.) He must, however, say that he should not be satisfied until all classes in the country were represented on the bench of magistrates. The Government

had full power to do what he desired should be done, and unless they exercised their power within a very short time he should call attention to the matter in Committee of Supply, probably in connexion with somebody's salary. (Laughter.)

The Address was then agreed to amid cheers.

THE HOME RULE BILL.

MR. GLADSTONE.—I beg to give notice that in case the debate on Monday on the introduction of the Bill to amend the provision for the government of Ireland is not terminated in the evening, I shall move on Tuesday to give it precedence. (Hear, hear.)

MEMBERS AND THEIR SEATS.

MR. BRUNNER asked the Speaker to permit hon. members of advanced years to take their seats in the House on Monday before 12 o'clock. He feared that unless such permission were given they were likely to be seriously inconvenienced, as there was certain to be great crush and pressure at the door of the House at the time at present fixed for opening it.

THE SPEAKER said that the hon. member was endeavouring to impose upon him a very invidious task. (Hear, hear.) It was one which he could not undertake. He hoped that there would be nothing in the nature of a crush at the door on Monday, and trusted that certain seats usually occupied by the same well-known members would be respected in accordance with the general custom of the House. (Cheers.) He did not see his way to do any more in the matter. The door would be locked on Monday and only opened at 12 o'clock, and precautions, which, however, he felt sure would be unnecessary, would be taken to preserve order. (Hear, hear.)

MR. BARTLEY suggested that the expedient of keeping the door closed until 12 o'clock should be continued throughout the continuance of the debate.

MR. CRILLY feared that if the door was not opened until 12 there would be not only pressure, but probably some scenes which they would regret. If every member of the House were allowed the usual free access to the House on Monday morning all pressure would be avoided. (Hear, hear.) The hour fixed for opening the door ought, at all events, to be changed to 10 o'clock. There would not then be such an accumulation of members at the door as there would inevitably be at 12. (Hear, hear.) He claimed that if he came to the House at 10 o'clock he should be allowed to take his seat. He objected to being subjected to unseemly pressure. (Laughter and "Hear.")

THE SPEAKER hoped that the difficulty feared by the hon. member would not arise. He was committed to the hour of 12, which hour when proposed on Friday appeared to meet with the general approval of members. (Hear, hear.) Some hon. members might not have been in attendance that afternoon, and they would be under the impression that the hour of 12 had been conclusively agreed upon. In the circumstances he did not think he could alter the hour. He hoped hon. members would co-operate with the authorities of the House to preserve order. (Hear, hear.)

MR. MATHER asked whether chairs would be placed on the floor of the House on Monday. Such an increase of accommodation was provided on a similar historic occasion in 1886, and without it a considerable number of members would not know where to find places.

THE SPEAKER said that he would order chairs to be placed on the floor of the House if it was generally desired that that should be done. (Hear, hear.)

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 6 o'clock.

Members and their Seats.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

The doors of the House of Commons were opened for members at midday, and within a few minutes every seat in the body of the House was secured. Members rushed in, and in the scramble for places Mr. Caleb Wright was knocked down, Dr. Tanner falling over him, but was assisted to a seat by a policeman. The galleries were then occupied, the one on the Opposition side being filled first.

At prayer-time the House was full. A double row of chairs had been placed on either side of the central gangway, as had been done in 1886, and again last year, when Mr. Balfour introduced his Local Government Bill for Ireland. Most of the Ministers and ex-Ministers were also in their seats. The Strangers' and Speaker's Galleries were full, and among the peers present were Lord Knutsford, Lord Rowton, Lord Iveagh, Earl Cadogan, the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Kincaid, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and Lord Battersea. The Earl of Rosebery and Earl Spencer were in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, and the American Minister occupied a seat on the Ambassadors' benches. At 20 minutes past 3 o'clock Mr. J. Morley entered the House and was received with Ministerial cheers. The private business concluded at half-past 3, and Mr. Gladstone then entered and took his place between Mr. Asquith and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the whole of the Ministerialists and Home Rulers rising to their feet and cheering vigorously. Shortly afterwards the Prince of Wales entered and took up his position over the clock, with the Duke of York by his side. Mr. Balfour came in a little later.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

The following Bills were read a second time:—Aberdeen Corporation, Ashton-under-Lyne Corporation, Barnoldswick Local Board, Bally and Caderton Local Board, Bolton Corporation Tramways, East Stonehouse Water, Edinburgh Corporation Tramways, Edinburgh Improvement, Fleetwood Improvement, Govan Burgh (Tramways), Great Forest of Brecknock, Harrogate Corporation, Hornsey Local Board, London Open Spaces, Paddington Recreation Ground, Plymouth Corporation Water, St. Helen's Corporation, Stirling Water, Towcester and Buckingham Railway (Abandonment), West Ham Corporation, West Hampshire Water, Wigan Corporation, and York Corporation Bills.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

MR. SCHWANN.—On Friday, March 3, on going into Committee of Supply, to call attention to the sale of hemp drugs in India, and to move a resolution.

MR. BARROW.—On Friday, the 24th, on going into Committee of Supply, to call attention to the incidence of London taxation, and to move a resolution.

SIR A. ROLLIT.—On going into Committee of Supply on March 3, to call attention to the subject of railway rates, and to move a resolution.

VISCOUNT WOLMER.—On going into Committee on the Army Estimates, to call attention to the report of Lord Wantage's Committee, and to move a resolution.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD.—On going into Committee of Supply, February 17, to call attention to railway and canal rates, and to move a resolution.

SIR C. DILKE.—On going into Committee of Supply on the Civil Service Estimates, to move a resolution with regard to Egypt.

LORD G. HAMILTON.—On going into Committee

The Speaker.

of Supply, March 10, to call attention to the defence of naval ports, and to move a resolution.

Mr. HANBURY.—On going into Committee on the Civil Service Estimates, to call attention to the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, and to move a resolution.

SIR J. FERGUSSON.—On the motion to bring in a Suspensory Bill with regard to the Church in Scotland, to move that it is inexpedient and unjust to interfere with the statutory rights of the people of Scotland in the election of ministers, until Parliament shall have decided to alter the state of the Church in Scotland. (Opposition cheers.)

SIR J. GORST.—On first going into Committee of Supply on the Naval Estimates, to call attention to the position of artisans and labourers in her Majesty's dockyards, and to move a resolution. (Opposition cheers and Ministerial laughter.)

NEW WRIT.

On the motion of SIR T. ESMONDE, a new writ was ordered to issue for the election of a member for Mid Tipperary, in the room of Mr. John W. McCarthy, deceased.

NEW MEMBERS.

SIR A. HAXTER, amid loud Ministerial cheers, took the oath and his seat for Walsall.

MR. RAWSON SHAW took the oath and his seat for Halifax.

THE HOME RULE BILL.

The SPEAKER (340) called upon the First Lord of the Treasury to make the motion in his name standing first on the paper—"Bill to Amend the Provision for the Government of Ireland." As Mr. GLADSTONE pointed out that questions (of which 38 were on the paper) had not been dealt with, the SPEAKER explained that it had been arranged to postpone them.

Mr. GLADSTONE then rose amid continued cheers from the Ministerial and Nationalist benches, the occupants of which stood up, waving their hats. He said:—Mr. Speaker,—I may without impropriety, I think, remind the House that the voices which used to plead the cause of Irish Government in Irish affairs have, within these walls during the last seven years, been almost entirely mute. I return, therefore, to the period when, in 1886, a proposition of this kind was submitted on behalf of the Government of the day, and I beg to remind the House of the position which was then taken up by the promoters of the measure. We said—We have arrived at a point in our transactions with Ireland where two roads part. We have to choose between the one and the other. One of them is the way of Irish autonomy according to the conception I have just referred to, and the other is the way of coercion. (Cheers and cries of "Oh.") That was our contention, and it will be in the recollection of the House that that contention was most stoutly and laudably denied. (Opposition cheers.) It was said, I do not say by all, but by very many members of this House, who did not concur in the views of that Government—"Oh no, we are not coercionists, we do not adopt that alternative, and neither can we accept it." (Opposition cheers.) That assertion of theirs was undoubtedly sustained, especially from those politicians whom we term dissentient Liberals, by the proposal of various plans for dealing with Irish questions. Those plans, although they fell entirely short in principle and in scope of Irish self-government in Irish affairs, yet were plans of no trivial or mean importance. They went far beyond what had heretofore been usually pro-

posed in the way of local self-government for Ireland. What has been the result of the dilemma—as it was then put forward upon this side of the House, as it was then repelled upon the other? Has our contention that the choice lay between autonomy and coercion been justified or not? (Cheers.) What has become of each and all of those important schemes for giving to Ireland government in provinces, for giving to her even a central establishment in Dublin with limited but important powers? All these schemes have vanished into air, but the reality remains. The two roads were there, the way of autonomy and the way of coercion. The choice lay between them, and the choice was made by the late Government. The choice they made was to repel the proposal of autonomy and to embrace in consequence the path of coercion. (Hear, hear.) I need not tell the House that coercion is a practice which you cannot always follow in an absolutely uniform method of proceedings. If we take the early part of this century coercion was then, though frequent, far from being habitual. Down, I think, to 1829 or 1832, there were ten or 12 years that were entirely free from it, but in the much longer period that elapsed between 1832 and 1886 there were only, I believe, two years in which Ireland was entirely free from the note—the disparaging and ignominious note—of exceptional and repressive laws. (Cheers.) Since 1886—I am speaking now of a matter of fact and am not indulging in either praise or blame—we have made another, a bolder, a more daring, step forward in the policy of coercion in Ireland. (Cheers.) It has been recognized as the normal condition of the country. It has taken its place for the first time in the shape of a permanent law upon the statute-book of the country. (Cheers.) My contention is this—and it is the first argument I lay before the House—that a permanent system of repressive law inflicted upon or attached to a country from without, and in defiance of the voice and the judgment of the vast majority of its constitutional representatives, constitutes a state of things of such a character that while it subsists you have not, and you cannot have, the first conditions of harmony and good government established in that country. (Cheers.) It is impossible that the inhabitants of such a country, labouring under coercion in that form, inflicted from such a quarter, and inflicted in opposition to the authentic voice which the Constitution itself has given them, can be brought into that sympathy with the law and that respect for the law without which there can be no true political stability and no true social civilization. (Hear, hear.) My next objection to such a state of things is this—that it was a distinct and violent breach of the promises upon the faith of which the Union was obtained. (Hear, hear.) I must for a moment ask the House to return with me to that period—and I am not now going to describe the history of that Union in the terms which, I grieve to say, I think it deserves, but only to point out the facts of the case. When the Union was presented to Ireland many of those who were friendly to it in principle yet made the admission that it bore an odious aspect. I will cite a Bishop of that period, one who was appointed by a Government of that period, a man of ability—I mean Dr. Young, the Bishop of Clonfert, who as a writer wrote in favour of the Union and supported it with all his might; yet he made this frank confession. In 1799, when the proposal had been defeated on the first presentation of it to the Irish Parliament, he said:—"A great question for the present has been unfortunately lost, yet how could it be otherwise?"

An incorporating union is certainly a degrading measure to any nation in possession of its own Parliament and in appearance entirely independent." He then goes on to adduce arguments why that Union should be accepted; and what was the great argument he advanced in its favour? It was partly the promise of commercial equality, but, much more widely than that, it was the promise of equal laws. (Cheers.) Equality in the system of laws by which the country was to be governed was the grand compensation which Ireland was to receive for the removal and extinction of her Parliament—that great symbol of her distinct, though not necessarily separate, national life. (Cheers.) Mr. Cook, the Under-Secretary of that day, who, next to Lord Castlereagh, deserves the honours or the censure that attach to the policy of the Union, published a pamphlet of great importance on the part of the Government, termed "Arguments for and against the Union." I will quote one passage, which is on the second page of the second edition of the pamphlet, which is dated 1798. He says:—"A union presupposes that when it is complete the contracting States shall be bound together by the same constitutional laws and government and by an identity of interests and an equality of privileges." (Cheers.) But there was also another prophecy which was justifiable for him to make at the time, and the result of which, I think, conveys to us a striking lesson. Mr. Cook cast his eye upon the Irish Parliament of that day, viewing as it was with eloquence and statesmanship. He saw there Grattan, and Ponsonby, and Parnell, and Foster, and Plunket, and outside Chief Justice Bushe and other men; and when Ireland from her own soil had thrown up that rich crop of political ability, Mr. Cook with confidence prophesied in these few words:—"We shall have Irishmen in the originating Cabinet of Great Britain." What has been the fate of that prophecy? (Cheers.) Two Irishmen, famous each in his way, and one of European and world-wide fame, have sat in the Cabinet of Great Britain—I mean Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington. But both Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington were the growth of Ireland in the period when it had its independent Parliament. (Cheers.) From the state of things in that Parliament Mr. Cook inferred, and from his point of view naturally inferred, that Irish statesmen would be in the Imperial Cabinet. But what, I ask, has been the case? It has been my fate, it has been my honoured destiny, to sit in the Cabinets of the Queen in concert with no less than between 60 and 70 statesmen, but among those 60 or 70, with the single exception of the Duke of Wellington, an Irishman has not been found in those Cabinets. (Cheers.) So much for the results of this Union of which so much was anticipated. (Cheers.) I now go back to the question of the promise of equal laws, which came from one higher than Mr. Cook. It came from Mr. Pitt himself, who, in a famous passage in a famous speech, said:—"Each country will retain its proportional weight and importance under the security of equal laws." Those equal laws, rightly or wrongly, you have not given. (Hear, hear.) The pledge of the Union you have failed to fulfil. (Hear, hear.) The consideration which purchased or which helped to extort the Union from Ireland has never been paid, and the broken pledge is written—and unhappily is indelibly written—upon the history of your country. (Cheers.) Now let us consider what is the state of the case with regard to the persistency and the self-assertion of Ireland. For a long time since the beginning of the century Ireland as a political entity was little

more than a carcass robbed of life. (Hear, hear.) From the year 1832, when her resurrection began, she did present a small minority in favour of restoring to her something in the nature of constitutional rights and of practical government. And, Sir, I am bound to say that it much astonishes me, in contemplating this case, and in thankfully remembering how generally and cordially it is recognized in this country that we are a self-governing people—that is, a people governed by our majorities—it is to me, I say, astonishing that so little weight is attached by many to the fact that, whereas before 1830—before 1835, indeed, as I should say—Irish wishes for self-government were represented by only a minority—ay! and by only a small minority—of her elected members since 1835—since the wide extension of the franchise and its protection by the machinery of the secret vote—(Opposition ironical cheers.) I perceive, Sir, a smile on the countenances of some when I refer to the protection of the secret vote. Do they approve the secret vote, or do they not? If they do not approve of it, I recommend them to go to their constituents and make known that fact to them. (Ministerial cheers.) The secret vote, it will be seen, is material to my argument, because, without it, perhaps in no countries—certainly not in Ireland—had the voter a shadow of independence. In the Parliaments of 1835 and 1836 there were 85 Nationalists—to use the general current phrase—85 Nationalist members out of 101 members, for I confess I only recognize 101 Irish members as popular representatives; and to the whole number, the 85 formed a proportion of more than five-sixths. They have now been reduced from 85 to 80 (Opposition cheers) under circumstances somewhat peculiar (hear, hear), and in the view of some of us—myself, among others, I must frankly own—totally and absolutely unintelligible. (Laughter.) Let us look at the state of things as it now stands. There are but 80 out of 101—that is to say, the wishes of Ireland for Irish self-government in Irish matters are represented by only four-fifths of its representative members. (Cheers and Opposition laughter.) Hon. gentlemen opposite seem to have no respect for such a majority as that. Do they recollect, Sir, that never in England has there been such a majority—never once? (Cheers.) No Parliament of the last 50 years has come within measurable, or immeasurable, distance of it. In one Parliament of 60 years ago, the Parliament of December, 1832—the first in which I had the honour of sitting (cheers)—there was by far the greatest majority that ever had been known in our constitutional history. The party of Sir Robert Peel, to which I belonged (ironical cheers), did not count, at the outside, more than 150, and would, perhaps, have been more properly estimated at 140, but even that was short—even the majority shown by the smallness of that minority did not reach to the point at which the Irish majority now stands. And, Sir, if there be anything in that great principle of self-government, which, if it be a reality is a reality that never can work except by the machinery and by the laws of representation, at any rate the voice of the Irish people, and the persistency of the Irish people in the delivery of that voice, and the peaceful and constitutional circumstances under which it has been so delivered ("Oh!" and Ministerial cheers) constitute a great factor in this case. But, Sir, it has been said—and I admit its truth in the present instance—that Ireland is not a united country. It is still a disunited Ireland in itself, and although the constitutional authority of the voice of Ireland

is, in my opinion, absolutely indisputable, I do not deny that as a social factor the division which exists in that country is a fact of great importance. In truth, were Ireland united, anything that can render her formidable would become very much more formidable ; but were Ireland united, your opposition would vanish as a shadow, and we should hear of it no more. (Cheers.) Ireland is not united, in this sense, that in one portion of the country not merely the higher classes, however the observation might apply in Ireland generally, not merely the majority of the higher classes, but a considerable portion of the popular feeling in one limited part of the country is opposed to the present Irish national movement ; and in a very small portion of the country—a very small portion indeed—is that adverse sentiment represented by a majority of the local community. That is so. I will not attempt to measure a fact of great social importance ; I will not attempt to measure the numerical strength of that minority, but I do wish to notice a circumstance of great interest and of great weight. It is commonly said—I think I heard it said by the leader of the Opposition the other night, at any rate the sentiment will be recognized as emanating from the party opposite—it is commonly said that the minority in the North is arrayed in an unalterable opposition to the demand for Home Rule. (Opposition cheers.) In order to show that a decision is unalterable, you ought to be able to show that it has never altered. (Hear, hear.) Unhappily, at the close of last century, at the successful instigation of those whose plot it was to divide the people of Ireland when they were united, through the medium mainly of the Orange Lodges, and through the demon of religious animosity, the Protestants of Ireland, during the period of the independent Irish Parliament, were themselves not only willing but zealous and enthusiastic supporters of Irish nationality. Inasmuch as their political life was at that period more highly developed, they led on the Roman Catholic population in the political movement which distinguished the period. This is written broadcast upon the history of the time. I will mention only one small and yet significant incident. It was in the year 1792—in the month of November—that there met in Dublin a body of Roman Catholics, under circumstances the most likely to have created jealousy among their fellow-countrymen, if jealousy could have been aroused, because they met, I believe, under the name, and, undoubtedly, in the nature of, a convention, representative of the different parts of the country. It was popularly called the Parliament of Black Lane, from the place where they met. They formulated their demand for political equality. Where did the commissioners who were charged with the prosecution of that demand first go to make it known ? They went to the city of Belfast. And what reception had they in Belfast from the mass of the population ? The population poured forth as one man to meet them, took the horses from their carriage, and introduced them with a triumphal entry, drawing them through the streets of the town. That was the feeling of the Protestants in Ireland a century ago. And we, who have seen them alter, not through their own fault, from what we think better to what we think worse, are not readily to be persuaded that they will not alter back again to the sentiments of their own ancestors, of their own blood, of their own religion, of their own people, and will yet form one, in a noble and glorious unity, with the rest of their fellow-countrymen. (Loud cheers.) One word more. I am not about to comment, in an invidious

sense, upon the well-known fact that England alone has a majority of representatives opposed to Home Rule. I am not about to menace England, for it is not by menaces that England is to be persuaded. (Opposition cheers.) I am not about to urge that England will find her strength exhausted and her work impracticable, if that work is to be a permanent resistance to the Irish demands ; for I confess that, in my own opinion—perhaps it is an exaggerated opinion—the strength of England, taking its resources in connexion with the substantive masculinity of the character of its people and their wonderful persistency in giving effect to the opinions they embrace, might maintain, if England were so minded, a resistance to the voice of all her partners—might maintain it for a time almost indefinite—spending her immeasurable energies in the manful, though disastrous, pursuit and sustentation of a bad cause. (Opposition laughter.) But I want to know whether England has arrived at that permanency of sentiment on behalf of that coercive and repressive policy—in denying to Ireland the full equality which we request on her behalf. To answer that question let us see what has taken place within these few years. It will be recollect that the brilliant chief of the Tory party at about that period said, “ Oh, the reason why repression and coercion have not succeeded is because you have not been sufficiently resolute ; you have gone this way and that way, to-day thinking one thing, and another day thinking the other.” But he exhorted them to brace themselves for a resolute, a persistent, an immovable endurance, and then, he said, the government of Ireland will be an easy task. To all appearances, the people of England gave a cordial response to that invitation, for in July, 1886, while, out of 465 members, they returned 127 favourable to our way of thinking, there were no less than 338 who were opposed to us, and then I think the noble marquis said that was an irrevocable verdict. (Laughter.) How deluded he was by the phenomena of the day ! The time that has passed since that year is not a very long one ; but now the 127 have already swollen to 197 (cheers), and the 338 are sunk to 268. There was a majority in England adverse to the Irish claims in 1886 of 211. That majority has declined to the more modest figure of 71. (Hear, hear.) With all the British persistency, valour, and resources, which no man denies, and no man endeavours to deny—with all that two-thirds of that majority have vanished, and I want to know who will be the effective guarantee for the permanence of the remaining third. (Cheers.) I have not endeavoured to couch these arguments in a tone of party. I have rather endeavoured, so far as I could, to address myself to the minds of reflective men, to beg and conjure them to take note of the facts, to use the past in the interpretation of the future, and to form a rational judgment as to the course which they ought prospectively to pursue. (Hear, hear.) Having said so much, I now come to the endeavour, in which I must further ask the kind and patient indulgence of the House (cheers), to give some intelligible account of the Bill which I lay before the House. I do not undertake to supply what may be termed a table of contents of the Bill. I think if I did I should probably bewilder my hearers, and completeness would be much more than balanced by practical obscurity. What I seek to do is to present to the notice of the House the principal and salient points of the Bill, to leave, if I can, some living

impression of its character in the minds and memories of those who hear me. Of course within limits, there may be differences of opinion as to which are the principal points. I may introduce some that in the view of some gentlemen are not principal points ; I may omit others that in the view of other gentlemen ought to have been mentioned. My only answer is to beg that gentlemen will consult the Bill themselves as soon as they are able, and I trust that it will be very soon, indeed, in a day or two from this, if we are permitted. (Hear, hear.) I may say in one word that, while it may be remembered that in 1886 there were five propositions laid down as cardinal principles, from which there ought to be no departure, to those five propositions we have endeavoured closely to adhere. Changes there have been—far from unimportant changes—but not, I think, in any manner trenching upon any of those declared principles of 1886, which were stated thus :—The object of the Bill was stated—and that remains the object of the Bill, with regard to which everything else is secondary and conditional—the object of the Bill was to establish a legislative body sitting in Dublin for the conduct of both legislation and administration in Irish as distinct from Imperial affairs. (Cheers.) The limiting conditions which I say were then observed—and which have, so far as we have been able to do it, been sedulously and closely observed—were these :—We were to do nothing inconsistent with that Imperial unity, of which I will say in passing—I know it will not be admitted that we are right, but so far as our convictions and intentions are concerned they would be too feebly stated by being couched in a declaration that we did not mean to impair it. We wish to strengthen it. (Loud Ministerial cheers.) We wish to give it a greater intensity than it has ever yet possessed, and we believe that a wise extension of the privileges of local self-government has been shown by experience to be the most effective instrument for that purpose. First, then, Imperial unity was to be observed. Secondly, the equality of all the kingdoms was to be borne in mind. Thirdly, there was to be an equitable apportionment of Imperial charges. Fourthly, any and every practicable provision for the protection of minorities was to be adopted. And, fifthly, the plan that was to be proposed was to be such as, at least in the judgment of its promoters, presented the necessary characteristics—I will not say of finality, because it is a discredited word—but of a real and continuing settlement. (Cheers.) That is the basis on which we continue to stand. And I will now state the main points in which we have endeavoured to carry that out. In the first place we have met, or desired to meet, what we think is no unreasonable demand for an express mention of the supremacy. There were two modes in which that might be done. It might be done by a clause; it might be done by the preamble. We have chosen the preamble as the worthier method, for if it were done by a clause it would bear too much the character of a mere enactment, whereas it is a radical and a cardinal principle underlying each and every enactment; and it is far better, in our view, to notice and to acknowledge it reverentially in the preamble than to give to it the character of some decision which might be supposed to be a novel decision of Parliament, and to expose it to the chance which any attack upon such an enactment might entail. It is not necessary to use many words for such a purpose. These are the words :—“Whereas it is expedient that, without impairing or restricting the supreme authority of Parlia-

ment”—and then it goes on to declare the creation of a Legislature, to which I shall come. What I wish to point out, with reference to charge frequently, and I have no doubt in good faith, made against us, that we are destroying the Act of Union, is this. I wish to challenge an inquiry upon this main and fundamental point. What is the essence of the Act of Union ? I wish gentlemen would ask themselves that question. That essence is to be appreciated by comparing the constitution of things that we had in this country before 1801 with the constitution of things now subsisting. Before 1801 we had two sovereignties in the country. One of those sovereignties collectively lodged in the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons of England; the other collectively lodged in the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons of Ireland; and there was no right, in the true public sense—the historic and legal sense—there was no more right in the sovereignty residing in Great Britain to interfere with the sovereignty planted in Ireland than there was in the sovereignty planted in Ireland, had it been strong enough, to interfere with the sovereignty planted in England. (Cheers.) The Act of Union made the kingdoms into one and made the sovereignties into one and the incorporation of the Parliaments was a measure subsidiary to the Union—subsidiary and instrumental. (Hear, hear.) That incorporation is the question which we raise, and which we wish partially, under the conditions of the present Bill, but not entirely to alter. The essence of the Act of Union was the establishing of the unity of the sovereignty of the country, so that the body thereby constituted, the sovereign body, was to be a body entitled to exercise those rights of sovereignty equally and completely throughout the three kingdoms. So it was, and so the reader of this Bill—and indeed, I think, the reader of the Bill of 1886, but with that I am not concerned now—will find that it remains. Then, Sir, the Bill constitutes an Irish Legislature. Power is granted to an Irish Legislature, which consists, first, of a legislative council, and, secondly, of a legislative assembly—power to do this; and now I quote the words of the Bill—“power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Ireland in respect to matters exclusively relating to Ireland or some part thereof.” (Cheers.) That power is subject to a double limitation, which I will describe in a moment. First of all it is subject to the necessary and obvious limitation that the heads reserved to Parliament are not to be reserved just as giving them to Parliament, but are reserved to them by way of excluding the new Irish Legislature from doing any act in relation to them. The other is that certain incapacities are imposed on this Irish Parliament. They are very short, and I will enumerate them—namely, all that relates to the Crown, Regency, and Viceroy, all that relates to peace and war, all that relates to defence, all that relates to treaties and foreign relations, and all that relates to dignities and titles. The law of treason will not belong to it, and everything that belongs to external trade—and upon that point I shall make a remark by-and-by—the subject of coinage, and some other and subsidiary subjects. Then as regards the incapacities imposed, gentlemen have been already made familiar with them in the Bill of 1886 ; I will only describe them as relating to two subjects in these most large and general terms by way of a slight sketch. They are intended for the security of religious freedom—and there they touch upon establishments and education—and for the security

of personal freedom, with respect to which we have endeavoured to borrow—I hope without trenching upon any just sentiment of Irish patriotism—we have endeavoured to borrow where we thought we could safely borrow from one of the modern amendments of the American Constitution. Then I come to the executive powers. We propose to subject the executive power to a change, which, I think, is generally recognized as reasonable—given one main proposition—that is, to place the office of Viceroy of Ireland so as to divest it as far as one can of the party character which it has hitherto borne (cheers), and does bear to a degree far from desirable, and to provide—though this will be the first time that there has been any statutory appointment—that the appointment shall usually run for six years, but subject, of course, to the revoking power of the Crown. That is the first point with regard to the Viceroyalty. The second point is that, if the Bill becomes law, it is to be freed from all religious disabilities. (Cheers.) Religious disabilities may have been, and I think were, very improper and inadvisable even before the abolition of the Irish Church as an establishment, but since that abolition they have become really nothing less than preposterous. (Cheers.) Then comes a clause which may be considered formal, though it is, of course, of great importance, providing for the full devolution of executive power from the Sovereign upon the Viceroy. Then comes the important provision for the appointment of the Executive Committee of the Privy Council in Ireland. Now, if the practice of the Irish Privy Council were the same as it is in England, I am not sure that we should have required such an enactment, because in England there is no assumption by members of the Privy Council, except when they are specially invited to discharge them, of any real or important functions. But in Ireland the line is not so carefully drawn between the merely honorary Privy Councilships and the positive exercise and discharge of the duties; and in order to make it clear how far these duties are dependent upon the individual, whereas they ought to be dependent upon the central power of the State, we provide that an Executive Committee of the Privy Council shall be constituted, and that this committee shall be so constituted that it shall be in effect the practical council for ordinary affairs, or, if you like so to call it, the Cabinet of the Viceroy. Then comes the question of the veto. There what we provide is that on the advice of that Executive Council, the Viceroy gives or withholds his assent to Bills, subject however, nevertheless, to the instructions of the Sovereign in respect to any given Bill in particular. Then I come to the Legislative Council and that body will require rather more words from me than the sister chamber of the Assembly. The question, of course, arises, Shall there be any Legislative Council at all? We have decided, so far as we are concerned, that there ought to be a Legislative Council, and upon these two grounds—first of all, the ground of general experience, for, looking out over the world and looking out over the whole circumference of the British Empire, experience I do not think recommends or perhaps warrants our resorting without a great necessity or some strong and peculiar recommendation to the system of a single chamber. In Ireland, so far from finding any such necessity or recommendation, we look to a Legislative Council as, on the contrary, affording us the fairest, the most constitutional, and the most unexceptionable method of redeeming the pledge, if it be a pledge, which we have given to meet the expectation which we have repeatedly held out that we

would, if we could, give to the minority in Ireland some means of vocal expression and of securing a fair, full, and liberal consideration for their views; though I do not say that the views of the minority in Ireland should, as they have done for so many centuries, entirely overrule and suppress the opinion of the nation at large. (Cheers.) Next, shall it be nominated or elected? There we come to this conclusion:—A nominated council is a weak council. If such a council attempted to make itself in any manner troublesome, it being at once troublesome and weak would probably enjoy but a very short term of existence. (Hear, hear.) We, therefore, propose an elective council, believing that to be the only form in which we can give any great force or vitality to the institution. Then how do we differentiate this council, you will justly ask, from the popular Assembly? I may say, first, that we do not differentiate it by qualifications imposed upon the councillors, analogous to the qualifications which used to exist with reference to members of this House, and which, if they existed now, would have deprived us of some amongst our colleagues whose presence here we value in the highest degree. (Cheers.) We do not propose to adopt that discarded method, but we do this:—In the first place, we take the number which it is proposed to fix at 48. In the second place, we take the term of the council, which it is proposed to fix at eight years, the term of the Assembly being a lower term. We then constitute a new constituency for the council—a constituency which, in the first place, must be associated with a value above £20, and I may say that with that figure we hope to secure an aggregate constituency approaching 170,000.

MR. COURTNEY.—£20 on what?

MR. GLADSTONE.—On valuation. In that constituency owners are included as well as occupiers, but subject to the provision that no owner or occupier is to vote in more than one constituency. (Cheers.) Lastly, as the only characteristic which I need name, there is no provision in the Bill to make the Legislative Council alterable by Irish Act. And it appears to us it would be very inconvenient if we were to attempt to alter the numbers of the Legislative Assembly; if we were to increase them, we do not know what increase it ought to be; if we were to reduce them, I think we should run very serious risk of causing practical inconvenience, especially in Dublin, at a time when functions of local and internal government come up to be newly exercised. We therefore leave the number at 103; we fix a term of five years, and we leave the constituency as it is now. We contemplate that these 103 members must not, in order to fulfil the spirit of the Constitution, pass hence to a Chamber in Dublin by our authority, but that they ought to be elected for Irish legislative business by the constituencies in Ireland. And, lastly, we make these provisions as to the Assembly alterable with respect to electors and constituencies after a term of six years, but in altering the constituencies the powers will be limited by a declaration in the Act that there must be due regard had to the distribution of the population. It will be necessary, as we have considered, to include in the Bill a provision for the purpose of meeting what is called a deadlock. Our proposition is this—that in cases where a Bill has been adopted by the Assembly more than once, and where there has been an interval between the two adoptions either of two years or else marked by a dissolution of Parliament, then upon the second adoption the two Assemblies may be required to meet together, and the fate of the Bill will be decided by the joint Assembly. (Hear, hear.) I must

now run with great rapidity through a number of enactments in the Bill which I should not be justified in omitting, but which I shall not refer to in detail. First of all, appeals, as we propose, shall lie to the Privy Council alone, and not to the Privy Council and the House of Lords. Next, the Privy Council may try the question of the invalidity of an Irish Act—try it, of course, judicially, and, I hope, in a reasoned judgment (hear, hear)—what is sometimes called a question of *ultravires*, not, however, upon the initiative of irresponsible persons, but upon the initiative either of the Viceroy or the Secretary of State. The Judicial Committee as now recognized is the only approach we can get to the Supreme Court of the United States, and of course I need not say that in the composition of the Judicial Committee due regard must be had to the difference of nationality. I do not apprehend any difficulty upon that point. Then we declare the Judges irremovable. That is quite right. At the same time I must say there is something quaint in our being so jealous of the Judges as against the Irish Parliament when it is recollected that the English Government in the days of its supremacy in Ireland never lifted a finger to make the Judges irremovable. They were not irremovable, and they would not have served the purposes of the English Government if they had been irremovable. (Cheers.) When in the year 1782 the Irish Parliament was relieved from its restraints and had imbibed an independent spirit, then one of the earliest, if I remember right, of its spontaneous movements, without being taught or tutored by the English Government, was to make its Judges irremovable. (Cheers.) We have got in the Bill a clause to provide for the security of the emoluments of existing Judges and existing civil officers generally. As to the principles which are laid down with regard to the constabulary, there are some of the detailed arrangements which will not be found inserted in the Bill. It has been thought better to reserve these particulars, and to set out in the first instance the principles on which we have proceeded. Then there is a clause which is intended to correspond with and to supply as far as is desirable the purpose of the Colonial Validity law. The object of that clause is to provide that, if the Irish Legislature passes an Act which is in any sense contrary to Acts of Parliament, that Act shall be good except in so far as it is so contrary. That will, I think, dispose of any controversy on that portion of this particular subject. We provide that two Exchequer Judges shall be appointed under the authority of the Crown—that is to say, under the Great Seal—for the purpose, mainly perhaps, of financial business, but for the purpose I may say generally of that business which is Imperial, because there are certain matters in connexion with the ordinary action of British law which we are not able to exclude altogether, although I should be very glad to exclude them on grounds that will be presently stated. Besides the appointment of these Exchequer Judges, it is provided that for six years all Judges shall be appointed as they now are, and it will be understood that that is really a method for dividing the jurisdiction, because with regard to future appointments we do not assume to the Imperial authority any power of fixing the emoluments. These emoluments will be fixed in Ireland, and the effect will be to establish a joint control over these appointments. Of course, when I said the Great Seal I thought it would at once be understood that I meant the Great Seal of the United Kingdom. As to the date of the meeting, so far as we can judge, the

month of September will probably be the most convenient time of the year we can name, and therefore there is a clause in the Bill which provides that the Legislature shall meet on the first Tuesday in September. (Cheers and loud Opposition laughter.) There are clauses securing the sole initiative in money Bills to the Assembly, and also providing that the Assembly shall not have within itself an initiative except upon the prior initiative of the Viceroy. Then there is a clause about financial arrangements, which I shall come to immediately, providing that they may be readjusted and reconsidered after 15 years upon an address either from the House of Commons or from the Legislative Assembly. Then, Sir, I must first give the principles which we recognize as applicable to the settlement of the important question connected with the constabulary. The principles are these, their gradual, though not too abrupt, reduction, their ultimate dissolution or disappearance, our full recognition and discharge of every obligation towards them in such a way that, as I hope we may say, the interests of that remarkable and honourable force will not be adversely affected by the passing of such a Bill as is now before us. During the period I have named, they will be under the control of the Viceroy, as the representative of the Crown, but, of course, it is contemplated that they are to be replaced by a force owing its existence to Irish authority, and therefore we propose and contemplate that, upon the gradual establishment by Irish authority in local areas of a new police force, the constabulary will be withdrawn piecemeal from those local areas one after another. Now, I come to two subjects of the greatest importance. One of these is the grave controversy which arose in connexion with the retention of Irish members in this House. (Cheers.) Accordingly, Sir, we have gone into this subject in a spirit of prudence, a spirit of circumspection, or even of jealousy; but it is a subject which in a great measure has been taken out of our hands—at least to this extent, that whereas in 1886 we proposed to allow the Irish representatives to drop entirely out of this House, we have yielded to what we believed to be the public wish that they should be retained. (Cheers.) Now, Sir, that preface to the subject is an easy matter, but we shall not get on so swimmingly when we proceed to deal with its details. For I must say that, whether we were right or wrong in 1886—a question on which I will give no opinion, because it is immaterial—in our view of the practical difficulties attending the retention of the Irish members, we were very far from being altogether in error. Strong language of my own is often quoted with respect to these difficulties, but I am bound to say that, looking back after seven years, and admitting that that language was, I might say, almost impromptu language on a rapid consideration of the subject—I cannot say that that language was really too strong. At any rate, it was absolutely free from prejudice. (Hear, hear.) I beg pardon, Sir, I ought to have mentioned two points with regard to the constabulary. We hope that a transfer will take place from the old to the new and properly Irish police force, but I cannot go into the details of the arrangements, which, we think, may be reserved to a later stage in the progress of the Bill. On the important subject of the retention of the Irish members, I do not regard it, and I never have regarded it, as touching what may be called the principles of the Bill. It is not included in one of them, but, whether it be a principle of the Bill or not, there

is no question that it is a very weighty and, if I may say so, an organic detail which cuts rather deep in some respects into the composition of the Bill. I do not at all dissemble that there are strong arguments which may be alleged in defence of the retention of the private members (Some hon. members.—The "Irish members.") I beg pardon, Irish members, such as we are about to propose. There is one argument which I must put aside; I think it is a most dangerous argument and in itself quite undignified, but it is the argument of those who say that, unless you retain Irish members, there is no Parliamentary supremacy over Ireland. I entirely decline to admit that argument. (Hear, hear.) If you do admit it you at one stroke shatter and destroy the Parliamentary supremacy of this country, I might almost say, beyond the limits of the United Kingdom over the vast colonies of the Crown. (Hear, hear.) I pass on from that. Though I do not at all admit that Parliamentary supremacy depends on the retention of the Irish members, yet I quite admit that the retention of the Irish members is a matter of great public importance, because it visibly exhibits that supremacy in a manner intelligible to the people. Besides that, it may make Ireland feel what, perhaps at the present moment, she cannot be expected so keenly to feel, but I hope at an early period she may come to feel it—it may make Ireland feel that she has a full voice on all Imperial matters. And thirdly, it has this advantage:—We cannot in our financial arrangements get rid of all financial connexion between the two countries, unless you are prepared to face a very inexpedient and inconvenient system of different sets of trade law. That being so, it must be that British budgets will have more or less of influence upon Irish pecuniary balances, and therefore it is desirable for the purpose of mitigating any inconvenience that might thence arise that Ireland should have something to say to these British budgets. (Hear, hear.) These are arguments in favour of the retention of the Irish members, and I really know of no argument against it, provided they are willing to remain and to take the trouble to come here for the purpose of discharging public business. There is no argument of an abstract, theoretical, or constitutional character against their retention. But the argument against it is that I do not think—to revert to my own expression, that has become rather familiar and threadbare—that it is "within the wit of man" to devise a plan for their retention which shall not be open to some serious practical difficulty. (Opposition cheers.) My object to-day is to open up the whole question for the judgment of the House. (Hear, hear.) I will endeavour as far as I can to open out the nature of these inconveniences. They turn entirely upon the conjunction of two points. The first of them is number, and the second is voting power. The first question that arises, of course, upon a number is this—Is Ireland to be fully represented in this House? Probably the feeling of gentlemen will be in favour of an affirmative answer to that question. But then arises another difficulty, which, no doubt, can be got over, but which must not be altogether overlooked. What is the full representation of Ireland? (Hear, hear.) In 1884, this House treated Ireland in what I thought a wise, but undoubtedly a liberal spirit, as some compensation for the gross illiberality with which she had been treated at the time of the Union with respect to her representation, but in a liberal spirit in assigning to her the number of 103 members. That number was even then beyond what, according to calculations from population, Ireland would have been

strictly entitled to. Unhappily that disparity has since been aggravated by a double process. The population of Great Britain has continued in all its divisions to increase; the population of Ireland, to my great regret, has continued to diminish. It has now reached this point, that whereas the numbers accorded to Ireland in the composition of Parliament are 103, the number estimated according to the ratio of Irish population to the population of the rest of the country would only give to Ireland the number of 81 members. I am speaking, perhaps, in round numbers; there is a fraction; but all through I am speaking in round numbers because it is far more convenient for general comprehension than minute exactness. What I come to is this—that, supposing there is a general sentiment that Ireland ought to be fully represented, yet there will be also a general determination to interpret that full representation according to the proportion at present subsisting between the population of Ireland and the population of the two kingdoms. Therefore, in speaking of full representation, I imply that the full representation of Ireland would be by 80 Irish gentlemen; and, of course, it follows, if that be the conclusion, that there will have to be a new election for these 80 Irish members, for I conceive the House would probably be indisposed to recognize the commission given to 103 as valid when it had been determined that 80 was the proper number. The question may be raised, Can we go below 80? It may be—I do not conceal it from myself as possible, that in the partially developed state of her political life, from want of practice in local government, and from the effects of excessive centralization, it may be that to supply a full number for a Legislature in Dublin, and likewise to supply 80 members for the Imperial Parliament, would not be very convenient to Ireland. However, I am met by this difficulty, that if Ireland is represented not by 80 members, but by 30 or 40, the effect would be that the object of retention would not be gained, because the voice and the vote of Ireland would not be adequately given upon those Imperial questions on which Ireland, if she chooses to assert it, has just as deep, vital, and large an interest as Great Britain. (Cheers.) Therefore we have endeavoured to arrange the schedule of the Bill in such a manner that this Imperial representation shall not practically clash in an inconvenient way with the representation of the Legislature in Dublin which is to remain in the hands of the Irish authority. I have stated one difficulty; but there is a greater difficulty left behind. What is to be the voting power of these 80 men? (Cheers.) Now, Sir, if I may suppose it to be so, that is an article of diet which will be found, decide it which way you will, to be somewhat indigestible. The question is this—Ireland is to be represented here in full. That is my first postulate. Ireland is to be invested in full—that is my second postulate—with a separate power, subject, no doubt, to the Imperial authority, yet still, as we trust from experience, a practically separate and independent power, as it is in other Legislatures of the Empire. Ireland is to be endowed with separate power over Irish affairs; and then the question before us now is, Is she or is she not to vote 80 strong upon matters purely British? I think that, in judging of that question, there is material sufficient to exercise in a masculine and beneficial way all the reflective and reasoning powers of this assembly. (Laughter.) My question is, Is Ireland to vote 80 strong under the two postulates I have stated? And I propose the question in Parliamentary

form, ay or no. There are reasons both ways. (Laughter.) I will even go further and say that in my opinion there are strong reasons both ways. (Renewed laughter.) I will go a little further yet and say that I have no absolute certainty in my own mind what view the House of Commons will take of this question. (More laughter.) Let us hope that they will take the right view. But I hope my adequate and impartial exposition will bring out as far as I am able the elements upon which, in whole or in part, their judgment will have to rest. First I will take the arguments in favour of their voting 80 strong upon purely British questions. One argument is that to which I made reference in 1886. We cannot put them off in a manner perfectly clean and clear from this House; we cannot find an absolute and accurate line of cleavage between questions that are Imperial and questions that are Irish. Unless we let them vote on all British questions, Ireland must, I believe, leave something too little or something too much, because there are questions which it defies our efforts to range with accuracy and precision, upon an indisputable principle, on the proper side of the line. There are some subjects difficult to detail which, I have no doubt, will arise in determining the competency of Irish members to vote; but the main point undoubtedly is that we did not see in 1886, and we do not see now, the possibility of excluding them from what is one of the very highest and most important among all the functions of this House—namely, determining the composition of the Executive power by their vote. A vote of confidence is commonly a simple declaration; it may be otherwise, but it is in the option of mevera to make it, and it is generally made, a motion simply declaratory of the will of the House. I do not think it is possible to exclude the Irish members remaining in this House from voting upon that great subject. That is the first argument. The next argument is this, and I own it touches me nearly and cuts deeply, if I may so say, into the mind and heart of any one who has had a long experience of Parliament and whose life has been associated for full three-score years with the life and movement of the British House of Commons. (Cheers.) It is this—unless the Irish members vote upon all questions, you break a great Parliamentary tradition—namely, that of the absolute equality of members of this House. (Cheers.) I cannot say, Sir, what a value I, for one, attach to the principle of Parliamentary equality. Be the man young or old, be he rich or poor, be he from the ranks of the highest nobility or be he a representative of the working class; be his powers what they may, be his standing here what it may, I hold, in defiance, if it so must be, of all merely conventional considerations, that the essential equality of the members of this House is a principle of the deepest consequence, and forms a part, and a fundamental part, of the environment in which we live, and which to a large extent enters into and makes us what we are. (Cheers.) Well, Sir, in what degree and manner will that equality be violated by a limitation of voting power? That is the question. There is no doubt that any one who will consider the practical working out of a plan of this kind will, I think, agree with me that the presence of 80 members of this House with only limited powers of voting is a serious breach of established Parliamentary tradition, is a breach which, whether you resolve to face it or whether you resolve not to face it, ought to be made the subject of your most careful and dispassionate consideration. (Hear, hoar.) And now, Sir, I come to the reasons

against the universal voting power. And my first reason is an extenuation of reasons stated the other way. It is difficult to define cleavage between these two questions—you cannot say everything on that side is Irish and everything on this side is Imperial. That, I think, you cannot do; but undoubtedly you can draw a distinction as to the great mass of the business of the House. (Hear, hear.) If you ask for the proportion of it I should say 9-10ths or 19-20ths, perhaps 99-100ths, of the business of Parliament can, without serious difficulty, be classed as Irish and Imperial. Then comes the question of a very great anomaly. I should admit it to be a great and very formidable anomaly if our nervous systems were of a character to be violently acted upon by the word "anomaly." It would be a very great anomaly, I think, that these 80 Irish gentlemen, coming here no doubt with most upright intentions as well as with an admirable stock of ability, of which we long have had experience—it would be an anomaly that they should continually intervene in questions purely and absolutely British (hear, hear)—questions, perhaps, affecting not even the whole of the United Kingdom—not even the whole of any section of the United Kingdom—questions of the most purely local character. We must own that, as far as anomaly goes, that is a very great anomaly. But it is not, in my opinion, the strongest argument against the universal voting of the Irish members. I wish to approach this question in a spirit of trust. I believe myself that suspicion is the besetting vice of politicians, and that trust is often the truest wisdom. (Hear, hear.) Still, we must not with our eyes open deliberately leave an easy entrance, and a strong temptation, to intrigue. I have great confidence, speaking generally, in the personal character of political men, but I cannot deny that there have been or that there may be parties that might descend to intrigue for party purposes. (Cheers.) If some very large question of controversy entirely British, but still deep and vital, were severing the two great parties in this House and the members of these parties knew whichever could bring over the 80 Irish representatives, or a large contingent of them, to support their views would carry the day, I am afraid, Sir, of thus opening a possible door to wholesale and dangerous political intrigue. (Cheers.) I hope that in this rather disagreeable delineation I am entering upon, hon. members from Ireland will not think that I am dwelling upon their particular share in these infirmities; I would rather suppose that the initiative comes from this side of the House. (Hear, hear.) I am afraid that in some given case, actuated by a warm love of country, Ireland might yield, or be led into temptation. I dread creating a state of things in which there may be an opening to intrigue of this character with the result that British questions might come to be decided on Irish motives. I know that this is an evil under which we have already suffered. (Hear, hear.) I regard that as absolutely inevitable in the present state of things. But with Irishmen I recognize in the fullest manner that, sitting at this moment in the House, the welfare of Ireland is with them the supreme, paramount, overruling interest. (Cheers.) I am not speaking of loyalty, but of party contentions, and I say I cannot blame them if, when British questions come to an issue and they think they can greatly promote the interests of Ireland, they are guided by that Irish motive in determining, and perhaps determining wrongly, the British question. That dread of intrigue appears to me to be a most formidable weapon. I think it is not merely an anomaly as we might view it in this House; but it is what

plain, unlettered Englishmen would think who cannot understand why Irish votes on some question of education, or some other matter in which Englishmen were interested and which was in no respect Irish, should be determined by those who had a separate Parliament to determine the same question for themselves. (Cheers.) As to that other question of the mixture, and the large mixture, of individual motives between some party on this side of the water and representatives from the other aide of the water, with the view to make use of Irish votes to decide some question of British interest by indirect means, and holding out inducements to the Irish members for their services, connected with the welfare of Ireland, I confess that I and my colleagues have not been able to face a contingency such as this. These are, I believe, very great difficulties, and difficulties which we have felt to be, on the whole, the most hard to surmount, and the consequence is that we have inserted in the Bill certain provisions for contemplating the full retention of the whole number of Irish members; but we have inserted limitations of their voting powers. We have inserted governing provisions—namely, that the decision of each House of Parliament shall be absolute and final upon all occasions which may arise, so that we may not run the risk of getting this great authority into collision with any judicial or other authority. I will state briefly what these limitations are. First of all, the Irish members would be excluded from voting on any Bill or motion expressly confined to Great Britain; secondly, on any tax not levied in Ireland; thirdly, on any vote or appropriation of money otherwise than for Imperial services,—there will be no difficulty here, because in a schedule to the Bill we enumerate all the services which by law would stand as Imperial,—and fourth, on no motion or resolution exclusively affecting Great Britain, or person or persons therein. Then there is a covering limitation to exclude them from any motion or resolution incidental to any of the foregoing, except the first; and the first is any Bill or motion expressly confined to Great Britain. We do not exclude—

Mr. BALFOUR.—Are they to be excluded in debate?

Mr. GLADSTONE.—No. The point is, they are not excluded from voting on a motion incidental to it. It appears to us that there ought to be some way that in a Bill or motion exclusively relating to Great Britain there should be a power raising a question whether such Bill or motion ought to be extended to Ireland. There may be those who will say "You set forth with rhetorical fairness, as well as you can, the intentions and conclusions that you come to, but the whole business you have undertaken is full of thorns and brambles; why not abandon it?" (Loud Opposition cheers.) But I will not abandon it. (Ministerial cheers.) The object of this Bill is autonomy and self-government for Ireland in matters properly Irish. (Cheers.) The Irish do not raise these difficulties. (Hear, hear.) If they are willing to accept that autonomy and take your terms, whatever they may be, as to sitting here or not sitting here, we, for our own purposes, have thought it right that there should be provisions for retaining them. Could there be anything more unstatesmanlike and ungenerous than to avail ourselves of our own wrong when they had met us freely and frankly, and accepted exclusion from this House, and when we had insisted on their remaining to make the difficulty of their remaining the reason for retaining them? (Hear, hear.) The retention or non-retention, patent as it is, is secondary to the great purpose we have in view. The secondary ought not to interfere with the

aim, the principle, the great purpose we have in view. We have offered the best plan which, after much labour, we could make. We have, however, feeling that the shadow of uncertainty may hang over the subject, with modesty affixed "unless and until it is otherwise determined." (Laughter.) I have still one function to go through, and that is on the subject of the financial part of this measure, the keynote of which is to be found in the provisions included in our plans from the first, and wisely, but I must say I also think generously, accepted by Ireland and her representatives, that there is to be one system of legislating for all the kingdom for external trade. That has guided us in the conclusions which we have formed—the unity of commercial legislation for all the three kingdoms. This commercial legislation may be considered either as taxing legislation or regulatory legislation, and, as taxing legislation has the most important financial consequences, I will refer to it now. Under the head of commercial legislation for this purpose we include Customs duties, secondly, Excise duties, and, thirdly, the Post Office and Telegraph service, through which nearly the whole commercial business of the country is conducted. By means of adopting this key-note I promise the House that we can attain what we think most valuable results, results which are likely to avoid clashing and friction between the agents of the Imperial and the agents of the Irish Governments. We can make under cover of this proposition a larger and more liberal transfer to Ireland of the management of her own affairs than we could make if we proceeded on any other principle. For example, we hope to escape in this way all collection in the interior of Ireland of any revenue whatever by Imperial authorities; we hope to escape all exercise of taxing powers except those to which I have referred, and we hope to escape cross accounts and cross payments of revenue accounts. There are some minor heads on which I shall not touch at present, such as Mint charges and the prospective profits of the Suez Canal. These I exclude from consideration for the moment, and I make for the main matter. The principles to which we are bound to give effect is that Ireland is bound to bear her fair share of Imperial expenditure, the word "Imperial" being defined as I define it. There are three modes in which this might be done. The first is the method of the lump sum which was adopted in 1886, and which was called by those who were not friendly to it the method of tribute. The method of proceeding by the lump sum we thought naturally disappeared with the adoption of the new plan as to the retention of the Irish members. Another method is the method of quota, according to which Ireland would pay 4 per cent., 5 per cent., or 6 per cent. of the Imperial expenditure. There is one considerable merit in this plan. If you fix a quota it is elastic, and if the transactions of the Imperial Exchequer should swell even to 100 millions, the principle of quota would still secure in an accurate manner the share to be got from Ireland. But the method of proceeding by quota has disadvantages. All the revenue without exception would be collected in the Irish account. When explaining this subject in 1886, I pointed out that there was a very large sum of revenue received in Ireland which really belonged to Great Britain. The principal part of that sum came from the Excise Department. I am now happy to say that, with the advantage of consideration which the Inland Revenue Department has had since the former plan was produced, we get rid of the difficulty altogether as far as the Inland Revenue

is concerned, and we can provide that the revenue levied in Ireland shall be the revenue really belonging to Ireland. But this is not so with the Customs. In the Customs there is a large debit from Ireland to this country—several hundred thousand pounds—and it is extremely difficult to ascertain the particulars, so that if we were to collect Customs revenue from the Irish accounts we should be involved in difficulty in determining how much of that revenue really belonged to Ireland and how much of it was derived from goods which were consumed in Ireland, but which belonged for fiscal purposes to Great Britain. Another difficulty is this: If we adopted the method of quota we should expose Irish finance to large, inconvenient shocks from the changes introduced in English Budgets for Imperial reasons, and we should also, perhaps, make it necessary to do what we are, I think, very unwilling to do—namely, to give to Imperial officers a meddling and intervening power in relation to Irish fiscal affairs. The third method is to appropriate a particular fund, to lay hands upon it, and say, "This fund shall be taken by us to meet the obligations of Ireland for Imperial services." The arguments in favour of this fund plan are these:—In the first place, it sweeps away all necessity for difficult calculations; in the second place, we have got the fund practically in our hands, because the management of the Customs revenue in Ireland must be British and Imperial, and, England having received the fund from that revenue, it would never go near the Irish Exchequer. We could keep it and thus avoid coming upon Ireland for payments from year to year. Then the Customs fund is very nearly the right amount. The amount is £2,420,000 a year gross and £50,000 being allowed for collection—£2,370,000 net. The Imperial expenditure is £59,000,000, so that we should have an amount equal to a charge of between 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. By adopting this method, although the rates of Excise and the rates of postal telegraphs would be fixed by the Imperial authority, the whole control of these departments would be absolutely in the hands of Irish officers. I ought perhaps to point out to what extent what I call the fund plan would fall short in exactitude of the quota plan. The latter would meet every emergency of peace or war, but the fund plan would not meet a great emergency like war to the same extent. Myself, in such an emergency, I should have very little fear of trusting to the patriotism and liberality of the Irish Legislature. (Laughter and cries of "Hear, hear.") Stinginess has never been the vice of Ireland (hear, hear), and looking into the *paupus post-futurum* of Ireland under Home Rule I am a great deal more afraid of her suffering from a generous extravagance than from stinginess. When we contemplate a state of war we look to three sources of revenue—one in Customs, one in Excise, and a third in the income-tax. Now, with regard to Customs, the plan we propose leaves that source of revenue in our hands, so there can be no difficulty as to that. I will not now enter into details, but as to other sources of revenue, in case of great emergency, we have in view a proposal by which we should make sure of getting fair and full provision from Ireland for special Imperial necessities. The Irish balance-sheet stands thus:—On the credit side there would stand a total of £5,660,000, and on the other side charges amounting to £3,210,000, for Ireland would take over the whole of her Civil Government charges, excepting the constabulary charge. We put the collection of revenue at £160,000, postal services £790,000, and we propose that Ireland should take two-thirds of the charge of the constabulary,

which would be £1,000,000. That would bring the Irish charge to £5,160,000, and we propose that she should receive against that all the amount I have already named as forming her credit, reaching £5,660,000. There would therefore be a clear surplus of exactly £500,000. (Hear, hear.) It may be asked, whence does that surplus come? We take one-third of the constabulary charge upon ourselves; happily it is, no doubt, a vanishing charge. That one-third would supply £500,000, which would be a clear balance that Ireland would have to start with. Then you will say, "At whose expense will that balance be found?" Well, undoubtedly either in the whole or in the main it would be found at the expense of the British taxpayer. (Ironical Opposition cheers.) You are no doubt shocked at that, but you have no reason to be shocked. (Ministerial cheers.) What is my vindication for assigning to Ireland this clear surplus of £500,000? There are a variety of arguments which might be urged. One of these is the argument which I by no means think to be without force, but it is not the governing consideration at the present time, and that is in former days, upon a full examination, I am well convinced that Ireland has been most shabbily and most unjustly treated in respect to money advances. (Cheers.) What I want to urge is this—that by arriving at this settlement with Ireland you will escape the impending and constantly accruing increment of Irish charges, and that it is well worth your while to come under this considerable but vanishing charge of £500,000 in order to escape the increment of charge for Irish local services. (Hear, hear.) Would hon. gentlemen like to know what that increment has been? Irish grants upon the average of 1833 to 1837 were £762,000 a year; Irish grants on the average of 1888 to 1892 were £4,042,000—that is to say, in 55 years there was an increase of £3,300,000, or a regular increment of £66,000 a year. Perhaps you may say that £66,000 is rather formidable and that things are improving now. But how is it according to the latest experience? Here you have the latest experience—that is to say, the experience of the seven years between 1886 and 1893. In 1886 the civil charges of Ireland without the constabulary were £3,094,000; in 1893 the civil charges stand at £3,892,000. The civil charges of Ireland have increased in the last seven years by an aggregate of £800,000 a year, and that gives you an annual increment in these modern days not of £66,000, but of £113,000. (Cheers.) I hope I may now release the House from the painful details to which hon. members have listened with exemplary patience (cheers), and which I have presented to them in this imperfect manner, but with every effort on my part to select for presentation those points which are most interesting, most vital, and most calculated to convey a fundamental conception of the spirit of the scheme. (Cheers.) Our plan may be a very imperfect one; it may admit of some amendment to be received from the impartial consideration of the House and from the action of friendly and possibly even of unfriendly criticism. (Hear, hear.) I wish it were more worthy of its object, for its object as conceived by us is certainly a very lofty one. It is no less in my view than to redeem the fame and character of this country and its political genius from an old and inveterate dis-honour, and to increase, enhance, and magnify the strength, greatness, glory, and union of the empire. (Cheers.) Sir, I hope I have not needlessly provoked polemical sentiment of any kind. (Cheers.) I hope I shall not give offence when I express in a few words my deep conviction that either this plan or some plan

closerly resembling it and identical in principle will shortly become law. (Loud cheers.) I know there is one risk, and that risk in my mind is this—that if the controversy upon this question be unduly and unwarantly prolonged, that which is now merely a demand for the establishment of Irish self-government in Irish affairs will become a demand, perhaps under circumstances less favourable than these, for the repeal of the Union and the re-establishment of a dual Sovereignty within these islands (cheers)—an alternative which I regard as wholly shut out at least from my personal purview, even if I had a prospect of long years of life to come. I view that as a possible danger looming in the future, and I wish to steer the ship clear of that rock. (Hear, hear.) I hope we shall consider the state of things that is before us, and weigh well the actual attitude and position of Ireland and the contrast between that attitude as it is now and as it was when Dean Swift said that as for the people of Ireland they amounted to a mere cipher and could not be taken into the reckoning upon the one side or the other, as it was when the Ascendancy Parliament of Ireland begged and craved to be admitted into the British Parliament and was refused, or as it was at the beginning of this century, after the Union, when the whole Union movement had been forcibly put down and when the Irish voters trooped to the poll for the simple purpose of returning by open vote their landlords to Parliament. We have now before us a very different state of things. Ireland has on her side the memory of past victories earned with sweat and labour, but really earned and recorded on her behalf. Ireland has the mighty sympathies which she has acquired in this larger and stronger island. She has obtained the suffrage of Scotland; she has obtained the suffrage of Wales. She has in the short space of seven years changed a majority of over 200 against her in England into a majority of one-third of that number. (Cheers.) She was stinted in her franchise and in her means of representation. She now possesses the most extended franchise with the most perfect protection, and the main object which she has not yet obtained she looks to obtain with increased means in her hand and opportunities at her command. (Cheers.) One other source of strength she has, and that is the moderation of her demand. (Loud cheers.) She has ever since 1886, if not before, in an unequivocal and national sense abandoned the whole of the argument which perhaps she is entitled to make upon the subject of the Act of Union, and she has asked you to save for yourselves every Imperial power. She has consented to accept the common universal supremacy of the Empire and she has asked only for that management of her own local concerns which reason and justice, combined with the voice of her people, and with the voice, as I hope it will soon be, of the people of this kingdom, demand. (Hear, hear.) If this controversy is to end in this manner I cannot but put it to all dispassionate men that the sooner it ends the better (cheers); the sooner we stamp and seal the deed which effaces all former animosities and open an era, as we believe, of peace and good will, the sooner, I say, that is done the better. (Cheers.) These are matters which human vision—at least my human vision—is hardly able to penetrate; but this I must say, on my own part, I never will and I never can be a party to the bequeathing to my country of the continuance of this heritage of discord, which has been handed down from generation to generation with hardly a moment of interruption through seven centuries, and with all the evils

that follow in its train. (Cheers.) Sir, I wish to have no part or lot in that process. It would be a misery to me if I had forgotten or omitted in these my closing years any measure possible for me to take towards upholding and promoting the cause which I believe to be the cause, not of one party or another, of one nation or another, but of all parties and all nations inhabiting these islands; and to these nations I say, viewing them as I do, with all their vast opportunities under a living union for power and for happiness, I do entreat you—if it were with my latest breath I would entreat you—to let the dead bury the dead (cheers), and to cast behind you every recollection of bygone evils and to cherish and love and sustain one another through all the vicissitudes of human affairs in the times that are to come.

The right hon. gentleman sat down, after having spoken for two hours and a quarter, amid loud and prolonged applause, the whole of the Ministerialists and Home Rulers again rising up and cheering with much enthusiasm.

The SPEAKER having put the question, "That leave be given to introduce this Bill,"

SIR E. CLARKE, who was received with cheers, said,—Before I ask the House to allow me to make some observations on the principles which have been laid down, and on some of the more important propositions which have been put forward, I should like to pay my own personal compliment and congratulation to the right hon. gentleman for the speech which he has just made. (Cheers.) During the last seven years the world has seen with admiration the unflagging enthusiasm with which the right hon. gentleman has devoted himself to this cause; and I am sure that it is the sentiment and the mind of every man here, to whatever party he may belong, to congratulate the right hon. gentleman on having been spared to give us in this House to-night so splendid an example of physical and intellectual power as we have all enjoyed. (Cheers.) But in listening to that speech, and hearing the right hon. gentleman explain a new system of government for Ireland, I could not help observing that we had not to-night any ground or reason given for the proposal of that scheme at all. (Cheers.) Many in this House were hearers, seven years ago within two months, of the speech in which the right hon. gentleman then maintained and developed his propositions with regard to Ireland. I am not going to quote much to-night. I think the most futile and worthless of controversies is pelting opponents with fragments of their speeches (hear, hear), and there is no one to whom I would be so cruel at the present time as to apply that pelting, unless it were the right hon. gentleman the member for the Bridgeton Division. (Laughter and cheers.) But I must quote one passage from the speech of the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister in 1886, a speech which refers to a subject the omission of which from his speech to-night certainly forms a marked difference between the two cases. In 1886 the right hon. gentleman said:—"I could wish on several grounds that it had been possible for me on this single occasion to open to the House the whole policy and intention of the Government with respect to Ireland."

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I know not how I came to omit mentioning one very important matter. The land question is reserved to the Imperial Parliament for a period of three years.

SIR E. CLARKE.—That statement is a very important one. (Cheers.) Most of us had noted the very singular fact that the right hon. gentleman's

speech from end to end contained no mention of the subject of land. (Hear, hear.) But the interposition of the right hon. gentleman does not touch the purpose for which I was quoting him. He said :—" The two questions of land and Irish government are in our view closely and inseparably connected, for they are the two channels through which we hope to find access, and effectual access, to this question which is the most vital of all—the question of social order in Ireland." And the right hon. gentleman then developed that proposition, and pointed out the three sets of circumstances in Ireland which, as he held, marked the social condition which demanded the immediate intervention of Parliament. He pointed first to the fact that juries could not be got to convict. The second point was the prevalence of evictions in Ireland; and the third was that there existed in Ireland almost unchecked a system of intimidation which disturbed the social life of that country. Why have we had no reference to these circumstances to-night? (Cheers.) It is because they have all disappeared. It is because the foundation of that proposal is gone. (Cheers.) We can now find juries easily and almost everywhere in Ireland who will do their duty. Evictions in Ireland are comparatively rare. We were told by the Chief Secretary the other night that rent was being better paid in Ireland at this time than in any period for some time past (hear, hear); and the system of intimidation which seven years ago formed the third of the reasons for interfering in this way with the government of Ireland has been checked and put down by the firm enforcement of the law during the intervening years. (Cheers.) But if we missed any reference to the social condition of Ireland from the speech to-night we may remember that there was a second reason, which was given seven years ago for the adoption of the Home Rule scheme. The first was that the social condition of Ireland was so grave that nothing but a constitutional change of this kind would be adequate to cope with it. The second was that the condition of business in this House was so difficult, and we were so overwhelmed with the work this Parliament had to do, that we must find relief by sending the Irish members away from this House in order that they might transact their business in Dublin. (Hear, hear.) Now we have a scheme proposed which is not founded on any social condition which existed and justified the proposal of seven years ago; while, as to the other object, it has been abandoned altogether, and under this Bill we are to have, not indeed 103, but 80 Irish members—I was going to say dodging in and out of the House—but, at all events, running in and out to take part in business as it may suit their wishes and convenience. (Cheers.) This is a very great change. What did the right hon. gentleman give us to-night instead of the splendid preface to which the House listened in 1886? He gave us some references to the hard case of Ireland since the time of the Union. He said that at the time of the Union Irishmen were encouraged to believe that they would be welcome in this country to the administration and the framing of its laws on equal terms with Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Welshmen. And, said the right hon. gentleman, " You have disappointed these fair expectations. You have been unjust to Ireland, because, for the whole series of years since the Union, only two great Irishmen have sat in an English Cabinet."

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I said that I myself have only sat with one Irishman out of the 70 statesmen with whom I have served in Cabinets.

The Home Rule Bill.

SIR E. CLARKE.—The right hon. gentleman says that out of 60 or 70 colleagues of his in Cabinets only one has been an Irishman. How has that happened? The right hon. gentleman has himself formed Cabinets three or four times; and he has been as many times again an influential person in arranging the composition of Cabinets. (Cheers.) How is it that he has never invited, or caused to be invited, a distinguished Irishman to take a post? (Cheers.) I believe that in other Cabinets than those with which the right hon. gentleman has been connected some distinguished Irishmen have found a place; and it is a little too bad to charge upon the whole country that exclusion of Irishmen which has been singularly conspicuous in the Cabinets with which he was connected. (Cheers.) But the right hon. gentleman passed on to the subject of the present strength of the Nationalist party, and he said that it represented an enormous majority of the representatives of Ireland. I was surprised to hear him, considering the revelations which have been made of late, refer to secret voting as a characteristic of Irish elections. (Cheers.) Everybody knows that the most active and successful manufacture in Ireland in modern times has been the manufacture of illiterates. (Cheers and laughter.) And at any election they have been produced in ample numbers, so that the ballot might be defeated by the inspection of votes at the polling-booths. To talk so confidently of the virtues of secret voting in the electoral system of Ireland, when the House has not forgotten the case of the Meath elections (cheers) is surely to apply a theoretical and ideal test to the conditions of life in that country. But the right hon. gentleman went on to say that it was true that the number of Nationalist members had been diminished from 85 to 80. He did not admit the significance of the fact, but he said that he could not in the least understand it. We believe that the great majority which still is held by the Nationalist members is in many respects due to electoral practices which we would fain check, to influences which have long been mischievously at work, and which we hope may disappear, and so produce a gradual diminution, already beginning, of the Parliamentary strength of the Nationalist party. (Hear, hear.) There was another omission from the right hon. gentleman's speech which was significant. In opening his plan to the House seven years ago the right hon. gentleman almost invited from members of the House some suggestions as to how he could deal with Ulster separately. (Hear, hear.) He mentioned several plans. The first was that Ulster might be conceded a separate autonomy. Another was that certain matters of legislation—education and the like—upon which Ulstermen might feel sensitive should be taken away from the legislative body which the right hon. gentleman was proposing to create, and should be given to local bodies founded on different principles and with different powers. We have heard nothing of that to-night. There has been no suggestion of protection of the Irish minority (hear, hear), nor even is there a generous invitation to the House to supply suggestions for the treatment of Ulster. What have we had instead? We have had instead a suggestion that Ulster might change its mind, and in order to illustrate the right hon. gentleman dwelt with much emphasis and much dramatic power on a story of the year 1792. He offers to the House this suggestion, that because in 1792 the representatives of the Parliament of Black Lane were received with acclamation in the streets of Belfast, that therefore we may hope that Ulster is going to change its mind. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) If Ulster is

Sir E. Clarke.

going to take another 100 years to change its mind, surely we ought to make some provision in the Bill for what may happen in the interim. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) I shall not utter one word of criticism upon the financial part of the speech, which is of too difficult and complicated a character to be dealt with until the right hon. gentleman's words are in print. The first change that has been made from the old Bill of 1886 is a singular and somewhat important one. In the Bill of 1886 there was a clause 37 which was, as we now know from Lord Thring, very carefully drafted. It was a clause which declared, established, and retained the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. It has been stated by the draftsman that it was desirable to put that clearly in a clause of the Bill in order that the Irish members should make their compact with this House in the very measure by which they were receiving Home Rule and powers of self-government, and should pledge themselves to acknowledge the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Of that we hear no more. From this we gather that there is to be no clause in the Bill which repeats and establishes clause 37 of the old Bill, but that the matter is to be transferred to some words in the preamble. To a mere lawyer this suggestion of the sacredness of a preamble is certainly a novelty. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) I think I can see the reason why this subject has been transferred to the preamble. If the Nationalist members are satisfied with the clauses in the Bill they will not take much trouble about the preamble. (Hear, hear.) If the subject were embodied in the clauses of the Bill it would have to be discussed and considered by the House, whereas, if it is put into a few words in the preamble, it may be shuffled through the House without any one taking much notice of it, or anybody conceiving himself much bound by it. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) Again, in the Bill of 1886 certain reservations were made with regard to the powers of the Irish Parliament, and one of those reservations referred to "trade." The phrase is changed now—it is now referred to, not as "trade," but as "external trade." We may ask ourselves what is the reason for that change of phrase and to what extent the internal trade of Ireland is to be subject to the absolute control of the Irish Parliament. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the Viceroyalty it certainly does seem strange that an officer of State who must be in the relations which must exist between the Viceroy of Ireland and the Executive Government of this country should be appointed for a fixed term of years, and I do not quite see the meaning of the phrase about the full devolution of the executive authority of the Crown upon the Viceroy. I think that that phrase requires a fuller explanation. (Hear, hear.) One great difficulty in constructing for Ireland any sort of system of Home Rule has been the question of the veto of the Crown on the acts of the Irish Legislature. We have had two absolutely inconsistent declarations on this subject. From the right hon. gentleman on the Treasury bench we have had a declaration that the veto upon the acts of the Irish Parliament must be the veto of the Crown exercised on the advice of the English Ministry. On the other hand, we have had in this House, and in writing, a declaration from representatives of both sections of the Nationalist party in Ireland that they would never accept any position such as their being subject to a veto advised by the English Government. In order to avoid this difficulty the Government have constructed what appears to me to be a fantastic bit

of machinery. An executive committee is to be appointed, but we are not told by whom it is to be appointed. (Hear, hear.) If an executive committee of the Irish Privy Council is to be appointed for the purpose of advising the Lord Lieutenant, who, upon its advice, would be appointed for the long term of six years, it is quite conceivable that the whole Executive Government of Ireland might be put for that term into the hands of those who are absolutely pledged to one set of political opinions, and therefore it is of the greatest importance that we should know by whom that committee will be appointed. (Hear, hear.) But by whomsoever appointed the right hon. gentleman has reserved scope for the interference of English Ministers in special cases, and that appears to me to destroy the machinery constructed to avoid this difficulty, because the right hon. gentleman said that the veto, although exercised upon the advice of the executive committee of the Privy Council, is to be subject to the instructions of the Crown in special cases. In such cases by whom will the Crown be advised to single out these cases for its intervention? I confess that there appears to me to be but small difference between allowing the Crown, without advice to the contrary, to approve Bills coming from that country and to interfere to prevent Bills coming from that country from becoming law. I now come to a very important question—namely, that of the appointment of the Legislative Council, which might be called the Senate. It is to consist of 48 members. As far as they are concerned the property qualification is to be dropped, but curiously enough as far as the voters are concerned the property qualification is to be retained. For the purpose of constituting a lower House of the Irish Parliament, the 103 members now elected by the Irish constituencies are still to be returned, but if a Bill, after being sent up by the lower House to the Legislative Council, is rejected a second time, the two Houses are to sit together and are to vote as a whole upon the measure, which will be passed or rejected by the vote of the majority. In these circumstances I can well understand why the exact number of 48 has been fixed upon for constituting the Legislative Council, because if, when two Chambers sit together, the whole of the members of the Legislative Council were to vote with the 28 Loyalists, the Nationalists would be always able to out-vote them. (Cheers.) The Bill will impose upon the Government the necessity of proposing for Ireland one of the most eccentric and fantastic franchises and reform Bills imaginable. The present arrangement with regard to the electoral system is to last for three years. What excuse is there for this? There is no part of the United Kingdom more full of electoral anomalies than Ireland, and yet you are to have the 103 members returned by the present imperfect system, and to secure that for six years no reform in that shall take place. But it is still more remarkable that you are asked to take the trouble of creating another set of constituencies who are to elect 80 members. They cannot be the same constituencies; are they to be the same persons? Are the members to be qualified to sit both in the Imperial Parliament and in the Parliament at Dublin? The suggested arrangement is so fantastic and strange that I imagine this Bill must have been drafted in detachments, and one part must have been stereotyped before that portion to which I will now proceed to call attention was framed. A more interesting and more impartial disquisition was never heard in this House than during

the half-hour in which the right hon. gentleman discussed the retention of the Irish members. One thing is clear; the right hon. gentleman has not changed his own opinion upon this point since 1886. It looks very much as if he had been outvoted by his colleagues, and desired to revenge himself by representing to the House the different arguments which have been urged by the right hon. gentlemen who have assisted him in framing his Bill. He put a series of conundrums to the House, as to what would happen in certain events, and he concluded by saying that this matter must be referred to the consideration of the House. He would like the House to stand by him, as against some of his recalcitrant colleagues. But, after all, the Prime Minister of the country, when he comes down here to propound a great measure of constitutional reform, is hardly entitled to throw upon the table of the House a proposal to which he has, evidently, deep-rooted and final objections. (Cheers.) Is there a Government, or is there not? (Renewed cheers.) Do they wish the members to come to this House from Ireland, or do they not? The right hon. gentleman the member for Newcastle said, if they were retained, that we should have all the present block of business; English work would not be done, and Irish feelings would not be conciliated. That I believe to be true. I believe that the Prime Minister has proved—aa he has, in effect, repeated—his statement of 1886, that it passed the wit of man to devise a scheme by which the Irish members could be retained here, and, at the same time, have an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin. The plain unlettered Englishman and Scotchman would rebel at the idea that Irishmen should come here to govern him, and so it is suggested that you are to limit the voting power of the Irish members. I should like just to test, at the moment when it is propounded, the possibility of carrying out that proposal. In the first place, the Irish members are not to vote upon any Bill expressly relating to Great Britain. Good. But suppose the Irish members should desire to overturn the Government after this proposal which has been made this evening is in actual operation. A Registration Bill is introduced which does not apply to Ireland. The Irish members may come down and ask that it shall apply to Ireland, and if that is carried then the Bill is to apply to Ireland. From that moment the Irish members may vote upon the Bill, and may defeat it. (Cheers.) A Suspensory Bill is to be brought in by the Government with regard to Wales to suspend the continued existence of the Established Church in that Principality. That is not a Bill upon which the Irish representatives would be allowed to vote. Good. But what chance would that Bill have of passing if the Irish members are not permitted to vote upon it? (Laughter.) To accept the proposal of her Majesty's Government will be to destroy all chance of passing that Bill, for I cannot think that the Government would lend themselves to the unconstitutional course of inviting members who, after September 2, would be no longer entitled to take part in the discussion to assist in passing a Bill upon a subject which does not concern them. (Cheers.) They are, we are told, entitled to take part in votes upon want of confidence, and one understands the reasons why they should be allowed so to vote. (Laughter.) Suppose after this Home Rule Bill is passed and the scheme is established and at work, and suppose that the Government possessed the general confidence of the House as then constituted, and suppose that the Irish members should come down and turn out the Government, who is to follow? The

Government that is to come in would not have a working majority on any subject relating to England. Let me put another illustration. A right hon. friend of mine was naturally anxious to know whether, if Irish members could not vote on any particular subject, they would not be allowed to speak, and he was promptly assured that the disability to speak was included. But what about moving the adjournment of the House? (Laughter.) The right hon. gentleman seems to think that votes of want of confidence are raised only occasionally and without any relation to the business of the House. But that is not so. A vote of want of confidence—unless passed immediately after a general election, when there is no reason for it at all (laughter)—is generally connected with some legislative project which the Ministry have tried to take up. This is not merely the greatest Legislative Assembly that the world has ever seen, but it keeps a close and intimate knowledge of current public affairs. Take question time. If with regard to some important matter of foreign affairs a question is asked on this side and answered from the other, the answer may produce such an effect upon the House that within an hour a motion is made for the adjournment of the debate, the object and the meaning of that motion, if it be carried, being that the House desires to censure the Minister on the spot for the line which he has taken. (Hear, hear.) What about the Irish members? Are we in such a position to wait until they can be summoned from Dublin in order that they may come over here to take part in the vote of censure? (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") The proposition is, I venture to say, impossible. (Loud cheers.) I believe it to be as true now as it was in 1886 that no human wisdom could devise means by which in a House like this, not only of legislative capacity, but also of executive responsibility and efficiency, you could have one set of members coming only for specific purposes and another set of members to deal with the current business of the country. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman put this matter very frankly and impartially before the House. He appeared to treat it as if it were one of those philosophic proposals upon which either conclusion might be arrived at without any serious results; but it goes to the root of his whole Bill. (Cheers.) It is vital to the consideration of this question that the country should know what is to be the form of the proposals, when her Majesty's Government have had time and the humble assistance of members of this House in endeavouring to persuade them to make up their own minds definitely. (Laughter.) We want to hear something else before this transaction comes to an end. We understand from the ordinary channels of information that this Bill, diligently as its secret has been kept from the country, was revealed to the representatives, or to some of the representatives, of the Irish Nationalist party. I think it is some weeks since the hon. and learned gentleman the member for Louth (Mr. Timothy Healy), speaking in Ireland, said, "We know what the Bill is, and that it is going to be better than the Bill of 1886." I want to know, if that is the case, what bargain has been made by which the Irish Nationalist members accept or are prepared to support this Bill? I want to know whether the terms of the bargain are really before the House? (Cheers.) You say that the proposals, or that some of them, are put forward in a tentative and hesitating way, merely as the groundwork upon which amendments and alterations may be made in the course of the dis-

ession of the Bill. (Hear, hear.) I should be very much surprised to hear that the Nationalist members had accepted the proposals which have been shadowed forth in the speech of the right hon. gentleman to-night, and I should be still more surprised to hear that they were satisfied with the arrangement made about the 80 Irish members and the position which they are to have in this House. (Hear, hear.) This, as I said, goes to the very root of the Bill. It is not only that the point is of so very great importance in itself, and not only that the proposals of the Government would, as I believe, disorganize the whole life of Parliament (cheers), distract our legislative work, and cripple us for the effective exercise of that control of public affairs which the House now enjoys and exercises. (Hear, hear.) But if this plan be not adopted, if the right hon. gentleman should yield, as he must willingly yield, to the objections that are made, and should agree that the Irish members should not come here, there goes at one swoop the whole of the financial portion of this Bill. (Cheers.) If the Irish members are to stay in this House, then those difficulties occur which I have ventured to indicate. If they are not to come to this House, the whole of the financial part of this Bill must be withdrawn and reconstructed, for it has not and cannot have any reference at all to a system under which the Irish members are to be excluded. (Cheers.) I have ventured, I hope not unsuccessfully (cheers), to put before the House the observations that occur to me upon the moment on hearing the proposals of this new Bill. One could not help feeling touched by the tone in which the right hon. gentleman at the end of that great speech spoke of the efforts which he himself was making to give a better state of things to Ireland, and of the anxiety he had as to the acceptance of those proposals. I do not think that they can be accepted. (Loud Opposition cheers.) At all events they can only be accepted after a long and bitter Parliamentary contest and after an appeal to the constituencies. (Cheers.) The lists are set, the challenger's trumpet has sounded, and the answering note, feeble though it may be, I hope not indistinct, has been promptly heard. We enter on this contest without a shadow of doubt as to its issue. (Cheers.) It is true we face to-day in this House a majority—a scanty, a casual, and a precarious majority. (Cheers.) I do not believe that that majority has union enough or strength enough to force through this House these novel and dangerous proposals. But outside this House, anxiously awaiting the tardy revelations of to-night, stand the millions of electors to whom before this plan can take effect the whole matter must be referred. (Cheers.) When we shall have wasted this Session and all its opportunities of usefulness over this Bill, you cannot escape the necessity of that appeal. (Hear, hear.) You know you have no mandate from the country for this Bill. (Loud Opposition cheers.) Seven years ago your policy was rejected, and from that day to this no single member of your party has ventured to commit himself to any single definite proposition upon any one point in the Bill. (Cheers.) The Prime Minister has scattered here and there ambiguous hints; his followers have prudently abstained from forecasting provisions of a Bill for which I believe most of them have hoped they would never have had to vote (hear hear), and they have contented themselves with appealing to the electors for their votes, and have asked them to give them their support as a mark of confidence and to wait hopefully till they came back with all manner of new things. (Laughter and cheers.) Sir, this showman's policy of concealment and sur-

prise cannot succeed. (Loud cheers.) You cannot subject a free people to great constitutional changes which you have never ventured to explain. (Hear, hear.) That would be despotism under the forms of freedom. Pass this Bill through this House if you can, and within a year you will be fighting for your Parliamentary lives before the constituents whom you have tried to trick (cheers), and whose hopes of useful legislation you will have wholly disappointed. We will challenge the judgment of this House upon the matter at such times and upon such issues as may best enable us to test and prove how far our opponents are agreed and what is the measure and extent of the obedience which English Liberals of the new pattern (laughter and cheers) are prepared to yield to their Nationalist masters. (Cheers.) Wherever this contest is to be fought, we face it with an unwavering confidence of success, strong in the judgment pronounced by the country seven years ago, strong in the happy experience of those seven years which has approved and affirmed that judgment, strong in the conviction that that decision was not a passing whim, no momentary outburst of political passion, but the wise judgment and the immutable resolve of the great people of the United Kingdom. (Loud cheers.)

VISCOUNT WOLMER said that for seven years the Unionists had been trying to get from their opponents a statement of what was meant by "Home Rule," and for seven years the right hon. gentleman who was now Prime Minister had withheld his confidence not only from his political opponents, but also from his own followers and the country, and finally bestowed it upon a section of the Irish Nationalists. The Prime Minister said the system of governing Ireland which was adopted by the Unionist party could not continue, and he based his contention upon the principle that a democratic country could not be governed contrary to the wishes of the majority of its people. The whole point of that contention lay in the question, Where were they to draw the line? In his opinion the line ought to be drawn now, and not after hon. members from Ireland had been equipped with all the paraphernalia of government. The Prime Minister neither to-night nor seven years ago attempted to deal with what were the motives of British statesmen in passing the Act of Union. What influenced Pitt was that if an executive were set up in Dublin dependent on an Irish Parliament it would inevitably lead to there being two Governments within the United Kingdom with different policies, and no one could then tell what would happen in a time of national crisis. The Prime Minister had never attempted to treat the Ulstermen with the same consideration which he had shown to the Nationalists. The right hon. gentleman said the Ulstermen were to the Nationalists as one-fifth to four-fifths, but that statement was based on the numbers of the Parliamentary representatives. Those numbers did not represent the true state of the parties in Ireland, as many parts of that country outside of Ulster were much over-represented in Parliament. They had heard nothing in that debate about the Ulster Convention. In every parish in Ulster the Unionists met in public assembly, and their meetings were reported from day to day. At those meetings delegates were elected, those delegates met in the great Convocation at Belfast, and there, without a single dissentient voice, they asserted for themselves, for their co-religionists scattered throughout Ireland, and for the whole of their homogeneous body in the North, that they never would consent to be subjected to a Parliament in Dublin elected by the nominees of the priests. (Hear, hear.) The Prime Minister lauded

the Ulstermen for the part they had taken 100 years ago, and called their present attitude the worse course—that was, that the worse part was attachment to England and the better part was dislike of the union of this country. When did the right hon. gentleman find out which was the worse part? It was when the two great political parties were nearly equal and the temptation was offered to one of them to buy the support of the Irish vote by the sacrifice of principles which up to then neither of them had hesitated to uphold. The question of Ulster was closely united with the question of what safeguards there were for the rights of the minority. In the outline which the right hon. gentleman had given to the House two very important checks or safeguards had been delineated. In the first place, there was the Viceregal veto. As he understood it, the Viceroy of Ireland was to have the power of vetoing Bills on the advice of the Irish Cabinet. That pretty effectively disposed of the "continuous exercise of supremacy on the part of the Imperial Parliament" of which they had heard so much. On certain occasions, however, the Viceroy would be liable to receive instructions from the Sovereign—that was to say, the Cabinet in London—on certain Bills on which the veto might be exercised. The second check was that appeals might be made to the Privy Council in London as to the validity of an Act of the Irish Parliament; but this step might not be taken on the initiative of the aggrieved parties, but only on that either of the Viceroy or of the Secretary of State in London. The Irish Loyalists, however, might feel their religious privileges in jeopardy; what was to prevent the Irish Parliament from voting any sums it chose for Roman Catholic endowments? There might be a question, also, of internal commercial regulations; what *locus standi* had the Ulstermen and Unionists of Ireland to protest against this step? (Cheers.) They could only depend on the action of the Imperial Cabinet directing the Viceroy to veto a Bill, or in inducing the Viceroy or the Secretary of State to move the Privy Council to test the validity of the action of the Irish Parliament. The late Solicitor-General had shown what a perfect chaos the retention of the Irish members would bring about; but the hon. and learned gentleman had lost sight of the fact that this question of safeguards and checks hung solely on the retention of the Irish members. Take the case of the Loyalists of Ireland wishing to protest against an act of the Irish Parliament. If the present political party was in power, the sympathy of that party would not be with the Loyalists, but with the Irish Parliament. (Cheers.) If, on the other hand, the Unionist party was in power, their natural bias would be to come to the rescue of the Loyalists in every possible way. (Hear, hear.) The Nationalists, therefore, would be left masters of the situation. (Cheers.) They would also have a direct inducement to use their votes at Westminster for the purpose of preventing any party that might be in power from using the clauses of the Bill either in connexion with the Privy Council or with the Cabinet for the protection of the Unionist minority in Ireland. (Cheers.) Yet the Ulstermen were expected to be satisfied with these provisions. They were asked to submit to this disintegrating element being introduced in the House of Commons in order that the Prime Minister might be able to pass the Bill of 1886, and yet to keep a majority of his followers with him who had all pledged themselves to vote and protest against the exclusion of the Irish members. (Cheers.) Unionists wished to retain the Irish members as a sign of the supremacy

of the Imperial Parliament and of permanent union; but they never desired to retain these members if their retention involved, on the one hand, the creation of a second Parliament in the centre of the British Empire and at the price of dividing into fractions that great force round which the Empire moved. (Cheers.) The hon. member proceeded to refer to the essays of the Prime Minister on "Political Meteorology," warning the right hon. gentleman that, though the Unionist majority had dropped from 200 to 71, there was no indication that it was likely to disappear altogether. Besides, the majority of 71 stood on a different basis from the majority of 200, because in that case it was not a majority of votes, but a majority of abstentions. The majority of 71 in England rested on a poll unequalled in the political history of this country, and the likelihood was that that majority would rather tend to increase than to diminish. He protested against the dissolution of the Union against the wishes, votes, and protests of one of the high contracting parties. Who made the Union, and who were the parties to it? The Irish Parliament for Ireland and the British Parliament for Great Britain. It might be said, however, that the Irish Parliament was corrupt. He did not deny it; corruption was the weapon of the age. It was proposed to repeal the Union in spite of the wishes of Englishmen, and, for fear that they would resent it, the Prime Minister introduced a garrison into the House of 80 Irish members to nullify the vote of England and Scotland. The Prime Minister, in a letter praising a recent book, said that he did think there was, perhaps, some little part left for the English race to play, but that no country and no race required so much discipline as the English race. Was it for the discipline of the English race that the Irish garrison was to be brought into the English Parliament? (Cheers.) As an Englishman he protested against that (cheers), and although he admitted that the majority of Scottish members were not on his side, yet he joined in the determined protest of his colleague the member for East Edinburgh against the amendment of the Bill by the introduction of Irish members into the British Parliament to vote on the details of English and Scottish Bills. (Hear, hear.) If on the one side the Government got out of their difficulty by allowing the Irish members to muddle and nullify the votes of English and Scottish members on English and Scotch matters, he could wish for no better cry at the general election that was going to ensue soon. If, on the other hand, they went back to the Bill of 1886, where would be the votes of his hon. friends who had been returned as Home Rule members for English and Scottish constituencies, pledged to the hilt to vote against any Bill that kicked the Irish members out of the Imperial Parliament? (Cheers.) They were all happy to have seen that day. (Ministerial cheers.) Day by day, week by week, and month by month for seven years the Unionists had put this drama before their political opponents, but they pretended they did not see it. The Home Secretary had said that it was the custom of the opponents of the Government to meet them with academic cobwebs. He ventured to think they were cobwebs that would require some sweeping away. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. DANE said he had listened carefully to the Prime Minister's explanation of the mode in which he proposed to construct the two Houses of the Legislature in Ireland, and the conclusion at which he arrived was that such a

Legislature would be manned by members who would be mere puppets of the priests. (Hear, hear.) The new Irish House of Commons was to consist of 103 members elected on the same franchise as in England. He would like to know in what position the loyal minority would be when those 103 representatives consisted of 80 agents of the priests and only 23 Unionists. (Hear, hear.) The second Chamber was to consist of 48 members elected on a franchise of over £20. The result of that would be that the second House would also be governed by the clerical party. What safeguard did the loyal minority possess against such a state of things? From beginning to end of the speech of the right hon. gentleman he heard of no safeguard for the loyal minority in Ireland. The three principal questions affecting the loyalists were those of the Judges, the constabulary, and the land. The Judges were to be appointed for six years to come as at present, but at the end of that period they would be appointed by the authority in Dublin, and if by any misfortune this Bill became law he supposed that in a short time many of the hon. and learned gentlemen who had been prominent in hindering law and order in Ireland would be presiding in Dublin in full-bottomed whigs. (Laughter.) It was said that the Irish constabulary were to be abandoned, but that the men might be re-engaged by the new authorities. From his own knowledge of them he believed that a large proportion of them would not willingly enlist in the new force. But what safeguard was there that the new force would protect the loyal minority? How would the citizens of Belfast fare at their hands? Again, the Prime Minister had failed to provide any safeguard as regarded land. More than any other question the land question lay at the root of agitation. The patriots of Ireland spoke in England of Irish independence, but in Ireland of the despotism of landlords. This land question affected not only landlords, but also tenant-farmers, by whom chiefly he was returned, and who under the proposed new régime would find it impossible to remain on the land. True, there was to be three years' grace, but that was a short period, and it was not likely that in that time the Imperial Parliament would advance any more money for land purchase in Ireland. At the end of that time what mercy might be expected by landlords and Protestant tenants? The hon. member for North Louth, the future Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, had declared that the property of Irish landlords deserved no more protection than did property in slaves, that landlordism was the prop of British rule, and that, as Christ said to his tempter, " Begone, Satan," so Nationalists said, " Begone, Saxon." (Laughter.) No action on the part of a public man had ever given more pain to Loyalists in Ireland than the action of Earl Spencer with reference to this Irish question. Earl Spencer once described the cruel boycotting which prevented men from exercising their avocations, asked how the loyal minority were to be protected and convictions obtained under a new system; and said that it would be impossible to hand over counties like Kerry and Clare to a local police. Yet he supposed the new authorities would recruit all the Russians in the country as constables. Some one cried " Shame," but he believed that this was the truth. The Prime Minister had failed to provide any guarantee for the rights of the loyal minority. The right hon. gentleman said that since 1886 the majority of Irish members had been neutral with respect to the demand for Home Rule. Then why was this legislation proposed? The real reason was that the right

hon. gentleman and his Government were dependent upon the votes of these men. At Aberdeen in 1881 the Prime Minister said that, if Parliament were to be broken up, one would expect an overwhelming case to be made out in the neglect of Irish interests; but there was no grievance and nothing that Ireland had asked had Parliament refused. The right hon. gentleman on that occasion went on to ask whether any sensible or rational man could suppose that we were going by Home Rule to disintegrate the great capital institutions of the country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of all mankind. He had heard no reason given why the Legislature here should be upset, except that the right hon. gentleman was in the position which he himself foresaw and warned the country against—a position in which a party from Ireland was able to say " Unless you do this and unless you do that we will turn you out to-morrow." So far as he could see, the Bill offered no safeguards for the loyal minority. He reminded hon. members of the great Convention held last summer at Belfast, when Ulster passed a number of strong resolutions and declared with one voice that she would not have Home Rule. This House was asked to set up in Ireland for the first time since James II. was King a Popish Parliament. (Ironical cheers.) The Parliament called together by James in 1689 was the only purely Roman Catholic Parliament that ever existed in Ireland. During the few weeks of its existence it confiscated 2,400,000 acres of land in the possession of English and Scotch settlers. That was what Irish Nationalists meant by Home Rule. (Laughter and cheers.) They said that the English and Scotch minority had no business there. (Cheers.) And that Parliament also attainted and sentenced to death 2,600 Protestants. On the ruins of an ascendancy abolished in 1689 they were asked to set up a worse ascendancy, that of the Church of Rome, worked out by prelates and priests who would not even follow the direction of the Church of Rome. (Loud laughter.) They might pass this Bill; but if they did the Protestant people of Ireland, a million and a quarter, would never concur (hear, hear); they would never take part in the selection of representatives; they would never obey its laws (laughter and " Hear, hear "), and if this great Empire wanted to enforce those laws against their own kith and kin it might expel them from the country. But he hardly thought that the present Commander of the Forces in Ireland would be the agent by whom that would be done (" Oh," and laughter), because he was the direct descendant of the hero of Newtown Butler, who led on the men of Enniskillen in the days of the Revolution of 1688 to victory, and insured for all time to Ireland the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

COLONEL WARING drew attention to the fact that 40 members were not present. A quorum having been formed,

Mr. WOLFF expressed the antipathy which his constituents felt against any Bill of this kind. It was ridiculous to suppose that any such measure would bring happiness to Ireland when one-third of her population believed that a Home Rule Government in Ireland would be the ruin of the country, and were determined to resist its establishment to the utmost of their power. Under the Bill, as expounded by the Prime Minister, the loyal minority would labour under the same disadvantages as they experienced now with regard to representation. The loyal minority formed not one-fifth, but one-third, of the population of Ireland, and if they had their

just proportion of representation in that House the Irish Conservative and Liberal Unionist members would number, not 23, but 30. The Home Rule Bill was presented to the English people as being more or less of an agrarian one and connected with land, and speakers, in addressing meetings in rural districts in England, had drawn terrible pictures of the landlords of Ireland and of their doings, but they never said anything as to the claims of the commerce and manufactures of Ulster, which he represented. (Hear, hear.) While the rest of Ireland had gone back, Ulster, by attending to its own business and by building up industries and manufactures which in many ways were competing with England, had advanced in prosperity. (Hear, hear.) Belfast at the time of the Union had only 3,000 inhabited houses, but now there were 56,000. The inhabitants had increased from 19,000 to 275,000. The shipping that came to the port at that time was 53,000 tons; it was now 2,310,000 tons. The Customs duties had increased from £101,000 to more than £2,000,000, and were only exceeded by those of Liverpool and London. (Hear, hear.) The linen industry had also enormously increased. The whole of the increase in the prosperity of the town was entirely due to the working population. (Hear, hear.) In his constituency there were 12,000 electors, and of these 10,000 were working men, and although they fully sympathized with the trade unions in England, they were as earnestly and sincerely opposed to Home Rule and separation as were the landlords, for they felt that their prosperity could not continue if they were cut off from Great Britain and put under the power of a hostile Assembly in Dublin. (Hear, hear.) Belfast had no natural advantages, and had to import everything—coal, iron, and even a very large portion of the flax used. This increase by leaps and bounds showed that the connexion with England had not affected the business of the north of Ireland, and why should not the laws which were good enough for Ulster be good enough for the rest of Ireland? (Hear, hear.) The soil was not fertile, but the agriculture there was as good as anywhere else in the country. They did not believe in the saving help of Governments, Parliaments, or Legislative Councils; all they wanted was to be let alone. (Cheers.) If the Bill of the right hon. gentleman were to pass he thought the best and ablest of the Irish representatives would remain in this country, and the men who would govern Ireland would have neither the training nor the ability to see that it was a foolish policy to destroy the prosperity of the North and so kill the goose with the golden eggs. (Laughter and cheers.) According to the Bill the Irish Government was to have no control over the Customs, but there was no such thing as finality in these matters, and circumstances might arise in which Ministers on this side of the water might have to rely on the support of the Irish members, who were not in the habit of giving away their support for nothing (laughter), and then that control might be obtained. (Hear, hear.) The £500,000 to be spent in Ireland would seem to be a very large sum, but it would melt away in thin air when it came to be divided between 80 Nationalists and their supporters and endowments for the Roman Catholic Church. New taxes would have to be raised; they could not be imposed on the poor and ruined peasantry; and it was to Belfast, which possessed the money and the earning power, that the Irish Parliament would turn and would try to rob in every possible way. (Hear, hear.) It was when these unjust taxes were imposed

that the trouble would begin. The people of Belfast had very little inclination to send their hard-earned money to Dublin to endow a Catholic Church and members of a Parliament in which no Ulster man would ever sit. (Hear, hear.) He believed that the Roman Catholic clergy were sincere and devoted men, who would make great sacrifices for the interests of their Church; but that only convinced him the more that they would do everything to put down the Protestant minority. ("Hear, hear," and "Oh.") Wherever the Catholic or any other Church had gained complete power, that Church had always striven to put down any other. The cases of Austria, France, and Italy, cited by the Chief Secretary, afforded no analogy to Ireland. In those countries the Protestant minorities were small and weak; but in Ireland the minority was strong, active, and determined. Besides, in those countries many of the Catholics were very lax in their religion; and in Ireland both parties regarded their religion as an active principle which they would carry out to the end. To what purpose had the so-called ascendancy been destroyed in Ireland, if another, infinitely more powerful and aggressive, were now to be set up? (Hear, hear.) The Prime Minister talked of the Bill bringing peace to Ireland. Instead of peace it would bring war, and instead of content, discontent worse than before. The prosperity of Ireland, gradually being built up, would be set back for many years, if it ever recovered from the blow. (Hear, hear.) Unless he mistook the temper of Ulstermen, they would have nothing to do with a Dublin Parliament; they would oppose it with every means at command, and they would only be doing their duty. (Hear, hear.)

MAJOR DARWIN said that he had listened to the speech of the Prime Minister with the greatest interest, but it was impossible to judge of it without consideration. He would therefore speak only on one broad issue—the protection of the minority. The Prime Minister said that every provision would be made for the protection of the minority, and that the supremacy of Imperial Parliament would remain intact. Hence the British House of Commons would continue to be responsible for the protection of the minority in Ireland. This was absolutely essential, looking to the state of Ireland for the past 30 years, to the methods by which the agitation for Home Rule had been conducted; and to the appeal of the minority that they might not be thrust out of the Union. On this basis the Home Rule Bill might be framed under four policies. First, there was the plan of retaining to the sovereignty of the British Parliament unquestionable authority over all persons in Ireland, to be effectively exercised. That was the Unionist policy. Secondly, there was the plan of establishing in Ireland a Constitution with special provisions for the protection of minorities, but dispensing the British Parliament from further responsibility in the matter. That was the Nationalist policy. Thirdly, there was the plan of keeping the responsibility and power to act with the British Parliament, but under the condition that interference should only take place in extreme cases. That was the policy of effective veto. And, fourthly, there was the plan of granting Home Rule to Ireland just to see how it would work, and with the determination to rescind it if things did not go well. That was a plan which would be certain to bring about civil war in Ireland—to grant Home Rule and then to take away again the privileges so granted. This Home Rule Bill must be looked upon as a final measure, from which there could be no retreat,

because if the provisions of the measure were to be altered subsequently the alteration must be in the direction of extending and not of limiting the power of the Irish Parliament. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, if the safeguards were not now made sufficiently strong, what chance would there be of making them more effective in the future? (Hear, hear.) The country ought to know to which of the four policies he had set forth this measure belonged. It certainly did not propose to carry out the Unionist policy, because it made no provision for effectually watching over the interests of the minority in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) It had been said that the position of Ireland under this Bill would be just the same as that of Canada towards this country, but the fact was that we had already parted with all our power for the protection of minorities in Canada. It was admitted that in the case of Canada the Imperial Parliament had no power to call for papers or to question Ministers with regard to the action of the Parliament of that colony, and the position of an Irish Parliament under this Home Rule Bill would be equally independent with that of Canada. (Hear, hear.) The Imperial Parliament had no power to compel the Canadian Parliament to award compensation to an injured minority, and it could not compel that Parliament to alter its laws in such a way as to prevent a recurrence of the injury, and the Imperial Parliament would be equally powerless under this Bill to protect the right of the Irish minority. (Hear, hear.) Then came the question, who would have power over that portion of the British Army which might be stationed in Ireland? The right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister said that the Irish Executive would have no power over that force, but he ventured to think that the right hon. gentleman was mistaken upon the point. The power of the Crown over the force would be delegated to the Lord Lieutenant, who would be responsible for the manner in which it was used to the Irish Executive. In the course of a recent trial in Ireland a constabulary inspector was found guilty of contempt of Court for refusing to give protection to a sheriff when the latter was engaged in the execution of a writ, and in like manner, if this Bill became law, the sheriff would be able to insist upon British troops protecting him as well as the constabulary. It was the Irish Parliament, therefore, who would have the real power over the British military force stationed in Ireland. In such a case the position of British officers who might be attached to the force would become intolerable. (Hear, hear.) What should ever be kept in view was to have a keen eye on the powers of the Irish executive. The Army would be, more or less, under the control of the Irish Legislature, and the House would have no power over the Army in Ireland so far as the protection of minorities was concerned. Any one who thought that the minorities in Ireland were to be protected by the Army were leaning on a broken reed. This Parliament, he contended, ought to remain absolutely supreme. Lord Justice Blackburn had said, in the case of General Eyre, that the supreme power in every country had the power to declare martial law whenever an emergency arose. This afforded a crucial test as to who would be the supreme power in Ireland. Would it be here or in Dublin? Military law and martial law were, it must be pointed out, two different things. It appeared to him that the Irish Legislature, unless specially barred, would have the power of dealing with martial law. The full sovereign law had been handed over to the Lord Lieutenant, and the Irish Legislature would be able

to deal with martial law. He wished to enforce the absolute necessity for seeing whether the protection of minorities really existed and whether the safeguards proposed by the Bill were really sufficient. So far as they yet knew, the Bill provided no means in the future for obtaining proper information with regard to Irish affairs; if they had the proper means for obtaining information they would have no power of enforcing their will; and, after the passing of the Bill, the supreme power, in cases of extreme emergency, would have passed from Westminster to Dublin, and the protection of minorities, so far as the House was concerned, would be an absolute sham. (Cheers.) The question, then, was—Should they reject this Home Rule Bill altogether, or should they abandon the hon. members from Ulster, notwithstanding their very strong appeal to be kept within the Union? He was prepared to admit that the rejection of this Bill would entail grave consequences, and that these should be carefully considered. But if their reason told them to reject it, then it would be an abject act of cowardice to neglect to do so through any fear of the consequences, and it would be a foul act of treachery to desert their allies in Ulster and other parts of Ireland.

Mr. SEXTON, who was received with Nationalist cheers, said that the animus of the last speaker was sufficiently discernible in one phrase which he let drop in the course of his speech. He spoke of those who impudently arrogate to themselves the title of loyalists in Ireland, and who were only so as long as the Crown continued to be the servant of their interests, as his allies. Did he not see that in making use of such expressions he considers the majority of the people of Ireland to be enemies? Where there was a will there was a way. If a thing was worth doing, and was right to be done, a way could be easily found by a less ingenuous body than the persons who composed that assembly. If it was a right and a just thing to give liberty to the people of Ireland a way could be found for doing it. But if they began by detesting the very idea of Home Rule, nothing was easier than to refuse it. The last speaker referred to an army officer, who would find himself in an inextricable difficulty because of his commanding officer being in the service of the Queen and the sheriffs in the employment of the executive. But why did he forget that the Lord Lieutenant would be an officer of the Queen? The law of Ireland would be the law of the Queen. If the officer found himself in any other part of the world he would have to obey the laws of that country in which he happened to be quartered. Therefore, the officer would find himself in no greater difficulty in Ireland than elsewhere. He quite failed to appreciate the force of the point with regard to Canada. The lesson to be drawn from Canada was in their favour. Canada was disloyal and bred rebellion. How did they stop it? By granting to her Home Rule. When they granted Home Rule to Canada her disloyalty became loyalty; her convulsion became content. When the hon. member says that the supremacy over Canada was only of a limited kind, he would remind him that if a full measure of Home Rule had not been granted to Canada the possession of that Dominion would long ago have been lost to this country. It would be easy enough to analyze such speeches as they had just listened to, and of which sort they would doubtless hear many more. He would not now pursue the hon. gentleman further, because he thought that the Government and the House, as also the country, had a right to hear at the very earliest moment from himself and those with him, who were in a special degree interested

in this subject, what impression had been made upon their minds by the statement submitted to the House that day by the First Minister of the Crown. This ancient Parliament, this mother of Parliaments, which had lived through many centuries, and passed through many memorable and dramatic vicissitudes, had never witnessed a more marvellous episode, one more touching to the thoughtful mind, more pathetic even to the general apprehension than that with which their proceedings began that day. (Hear, hear.) Few of them who remembered the day when the right hon. gentleman, at the age of 77, brought in his Bill of 1886 thought it within the limits of possibility that, after a further period of seven years, it would fall to his lot to renew that noble effort. (Hear, hear.) Looking back upon all that had passed within the last seven years, remembering how cheerfully the right hon. gentleman accepted the fiat of the people, with what energy, with what single-minded devotion he had supported, sustained, and advanced the Home Rule cause in the last seven years that had since intervened, remembering with what heroic will and with what even temper he had encountered all the difficulties inherent to the situation, and those which neither he nor they could have anticipated—when they recollect these things, and remembered how he had stood by their cause, he said that, win or lose—and he would win (Ministerial cheers)—he had secured beyond all change the gratitude of the Irish people. (Ministerial and Nationalist cheers.) Were he an Englishman, no matter what were his party, he should feel proud that his race had produced a man who did not find his peer to-day in any other race in the world (cheers), because there was no man, he believed, except the Prime Minister of England, who, at the age of 84, could have even attempted to approach the task which with such brilliant lucidity and such masterly concentration of intellectual power he expounded in the House. (Cheers.) The Bill which the right hon. gentleman introduced in 1886 was accepted by the Irish party and by the Irish people and their race throughout the world as the basis of a permanent settlement. (An hon. member.—The basis.) Yes, the basis; they could say no more of the first and second reading. So far as the Bill could be accepted upon the second reading, it was accepted as a settlement of the Constitutional question, and the fact that it was so accepted narrowed the area of controversy which it was necessary to carry on to-day. (Hear, hear.) At the late election the Prime Minister was returned to power upon his Home Rule pledge, and he was glad to bear testimony to the fact that upon the first day allowed to him by Parliamentary usage he had brought forward his Bill for the better government of Ireland. (Cheers.) He called that a prompt and an honourable proceeding in the discharge of a promise, and he augured well from it for the future. (Hear, hear.) The question was whether the scheme produced in outline that day offered fair security to Ireland, within the usages of the British Constitution, for a free Legislative Executive. [The hon. gentleman was about to discuss the question of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, when Mr. R. Spencer, one of the Ministerial Whips, hurriedly entered the House with a slip of paper announcing the Gladstonian victory at Pentecost. He handed the figures of the polling to Mr. J. Morley, and loud cheers were immediately raised on the Ministerial benches.] The Prime Minister once spoke of the flowing tide. (Cheers.) That tide appeared to be flowing still. They had not, he thought, quite reached high water yet, but they were very near it (Opposition cheers),

and he thought that on the crest of that wave they would either carry Home Rule at the first attempt or submerge perhaps some ancient institution. (Cheers and laughter.) On the subject of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, a great deal of language was wasted. The supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was an incontrovertible fact. (Cheers.) A fact could not be any more than a fact; and it did not become more actual when it was made the subject of a declaration. The supremacy of the Imperial Parliament existed, and could not be altered; and, for his part, he did not object to any declaration either in the preamble or in the clauses of the Bill which declared what he accepted as a notorious and incontrovertible fact. It was sometimes suggested that a declaration should be made to the effect that the Imperial Parliament would not interfere within the appointed sphere of the Parliament of Ireland. He should not value a declaration of that kind, even if made, because such a declaration by this Parliament would not bind another Parliament, nor even itself. If this Parliament were to declare to-morrow that it would never again make any law for Ireland, it would be open for another Parliament next year to make a different and contrary declaration. Whenever he heard references to this effect, he was always reminded of 1782, when this country renounced in the most solemn language of an Act of Parliament all right to make laws for Ireland, and of 1800, when it tranquilly resumed the right. (Cheers.) The Imperial Parliament was supreme, but he held the passing of the Home Rule Bill, reserving certain subjects to the Imperial Parliament and committing others to the Parliament of Ireland, as amounting to a compact which would be observed by men of commonsense that there would be no capricious or vexatious interference by this Parliament with an action within the appointed sphere of the Parliament of Ireland. If such interference were attempted, the presence in this Parliament of 80 Irish members—a number which had been found to be sufficient to initiate an Irish Constitution—would be found sufficient to protect an Irish Constitution when it was given. (Cheers.) He thought that the Prime Minister had created some confusion in the minds of those who heard him by speaking of the Executive Government of Ireland as a Committee of the Irish Privy Council. That was the technical and constitutional method of describing a Cabinet; and what the Prime Minister meant, no doubt, was that the Ministers of the Irish House of Commons would be members of the Irish Privy Council, but that the members of the Executive Committee would be the persons chosen and maintained in the position of Ministers by the constitution of the Irish Executive. The provisions in this Bill for an Irish Executive were better than in the Bill of 1886. (Cheers.) He might say at once that, regarding the Bill as a scheme for the establishment of constitutional government in Ireland—a Legislature free according to constitutional usage, and an Executive responsible to native control—the plan as a whole was a better plan than that of 1886. (Cheers.) The plan, as described to the House that afternoon, also placed before them the constitutional function of the Irish Ministers, and their power to control the government of the country and the relations to the representatives of the people—provisions which, he thought, were absent in the former measure. The control of the police was the fundamental question in the sphere of Executive government. If he remembered rightly the statement of the Prime Minister it was intended that the Irish Government from its inception should have the power

to establish a local and civil force. As it proceeded and notified to the Lord Lieutenant that it had established an adequate civil force in any area the Lord Lieutenant, after a limited interval, would withdraw the constabulary from that area ; and when the Irish Government notified that they had completed the organization of the civil force the Lord Lieutenant, after a certain interval, or at his discretion after the lapse of a certain number of years from the passing of the Bill, would dissolve the constabulary force. He did not gather from the Prime Minister whether a term of years was named in his speech, but he was entitled to expect that a term of years would be defined in the Bill. ("Hear, hear" from Mr. Morley.) The term of years, he thought, would not be a matter of disagreement, but it should be a limited term. He did not think that the Irish people or their representatives would be disposed to be exacting as to the question of a year or two. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman referred to the transfer of men from the existing force to the force established by the Irish Government. He spoke that evening with full authority from the whole body of Irish Nationalists. (Cheers.)

COLONEL NOLAN (vehemently).--No, no. (Laughter.)

Mr. SEXTON said if the hon. and gallant member had listened to what he was about to say he would have found that he spoke for the full body of Nationalists with whom he was at present acting. Even those Nationalists with whom on some questions he regretted to find himself in disagreement would not dispute the statement that the conflicts that had occurred between the constabulary of Ireland and the Irish people were due to the fact that the police, because of their position as a political and semi-military force, had to maintain a policy hateful to the people and very often hateful to themselves. (Cheers.) With Home Rule all that would pass away ; and so far as he could speak for the Irish people they would most willingly concur in promoting the transfer of men from the constabulary force to the civil force to be formed in Ireland, and in facilitating any mode of arrangement by which they would secure that the engagements of the Imperial Parliament to these men should be faithfully kept. (Cheers.) Passing to the question of the Irish Legislature, he said at once that his party thought it better to have two Houses than to have only one with two orders in it, in a country inhabited by people of lively temperament like the Irish nation. (Laughter.) As to the Legislative Assembly, he was satisfied that, elected by the present constituents on the present franchise, it would duly represent the opinion of Ireland and faithfully discharge its functions. The number might be found too small ; the proposed Legislature would be the smallest in the world for such a population ; and it might be well to have power in the Bill to alter the numbers in both Houses provided that the proportion between the numbers remained the same. The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham, who lightened up the question occasionally by sallies into arithmetic, was in the habit of saying the Unionists of Ireland numbered one-third of the people, and at other times that they reached 2,000,000. The Legislative Council would be elected on a franchise of over £20 ; and he did not believe that the number of people rated at an amount over £20 exceeded 150,000. Therefore, only one in 30 of the population and one in six of the Parliamentary electors in Ireland would vote for the members of the Legislative Assembly, and if the Unionists in Ireland were 2,000,000 out of 4½ millions,

and if, as they knew, on the unimpeachable authority of the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham, they held not only most of the intelligence and nearly all the education, but absolutely all the wealth, did it not follow that they would so dominate the electorate from which the Legislative Council was chosen that they would necessarily control every constituency in Ireland ? (Cheers.) If it was intended that the Legislative Council should by dissent defeat Bills sent up from the Assembly the case would be one of deadlock, and they could not accept such a Chamber. But the function of the Legislative Council was to secure reasonable delay and full reconsideration of every important Bill, to guard the minority in Ireland against precipitate legislation, and therefore they were not too censorious, nor did they inquire too curiously into the franchise by which the Upper Chamber was constituted. They were willing that the minority should have a strong majority there, and if they were half the number stated by Mr. Chamberlain they would be able not only to elect the whole of the Legislative Council but when it came to the question of a joint Session it might perhaps be a close run between the popular party and the party elected on the property franchise. He, however, was satisfied. He was willing to give the minority the control of the Upper Chamber ; he was willing to give them such a force as would enable them upon certain questions even to defeat Bills in the joint Session ; but he believed that by the Constitution of the proposed Legislature the passing of any Bill in which the feelings and interests of the main body of the Irish people were deeply concerned was secured. (Cheers.) By the Bill of 1886 an Upper Chamber was so artificially constructed that it might impede the Lower Chamber for three years. Now such a delay would excite public feeling upon important Bills to the extent of irritation, without accomplishing any useful result which could not have been accomplished by a smaller term. He considered the proposal in the present Bill of the summoning forthwith of a joint council was a great improvement. He thought that this gave a fair prospect of reasonably safe and speedy legislation as to all questions in which the Irish people were deeply concerned. The Prime Minister said the Irish Parliament was to have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the country, and that its jurisdiction should extend to all matters relating to Ireland or parts thereof. It was for a constitutional lawyer to decide whether there was any difference here as compared with the Bill of 1886. It appeared to him that the Bill of to-day was sufficient for the purpose, and he was content. As to the restrictions upon the Irish Parliament, they were informed that they were to be substantially the same as in the Bill of 1886, with an addition from the American Constitution as to personal freedom. He should desire to study the language of this amendment. In the meantime he should say that any language taken from the American Constitution would be scarcely likely to meet with objections at their hands. (Hear, hear.) Generally, on the subject of restrictions, he should say the Irish people would not desire to perpetrate oppression against any class or any man (cheers) with respect either to his religious belief, his property, his income, or any interest of his, his freedom, or his life. They should not be disposed to offer any opposition, provided always that there was no restriction which would interfere with the necessary powers of the Legislature where the public interests were

concerned. As to the reservations of the Imperial Parliament, there was no material difference from the Bill of 1886; and, as they made no objection then, they made none now. As to the land question, the Prime Minister said it would, for a term of three years, be reserved from the Irish Parliament. This was, in substance, the same as in 1886. He assumed, however, that after three years it should pass without reserve to the Irish Legislature. In the meantime, they must not forget the matters of the revision of judicial rent and of compulsory sale. To provide against any contingency here the Irish members should be retained in this House in their present number. (Opposition laughter.) They could not allow the greatest of Irish questions to be dealt with while their numbers were diminished. As to the veto of the Crown, he thought it recognized more clearly the working of the Irish Constitution than the Bill of 1886. He did not think he might dwell upon that. Upon the question of *ultra vires* he had a few words to say. In 1886 the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was accepted as a tribunal. They had heard from the Prime Minister not only what was contained in the Bill of 1886—namely, that the Committee, when called together for hearing appeals on questions of the incompetence of the Irish Parliament, would include in its composition a representative of the Irish Judiciary, but also that the judgment of the Privy Council would be a reasoned judgment. The Nationalist members regarded it of considerable importance that the Privy Council should explain their judgments and give their reasons. If he might he would make one or two suggestions on this point. He thought it would greatly tend to conciliate feeling in Ireland if it could be arranged that there should be a *rota* of the Privy Council for the purpose of questions of this kind, in order to secure that the tribunal should not be arbitrarily formed. (Hear, hear.) He hoped, too, that the parties to a case might be represented by counsel. These points being granted, he should say that the adjudication of the Privy Council would be most readily and cordially accepted by the representatives of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) In the scheme of 1886 the whole revenue of Ireland was to be collected by a Receiver-General, and he must acknowledge that the substitution of the plan whereby the Government of Ireland would collect the whole of the local revenue was an improvement of very great importance. He would suggest that one Exchequer Judge would be sufficient to take care of the Imperial revenue. As to the question of contribution in case of national emergency, in 1886 there was before the House a scheme which excluded Irish members from the Imperial Parliament, and it was to be left to the Irish Parliament to determine what the contribution should be; but now the Irish members were to be members of the Imperial Parliament. So long as Ireland contributed to the Imperial Exchequer, so long was the right of her representatives to vote in proportion to her population upon Imperial affairs unquestionable, and having that power they would agree to contribute in case of national emergency. But in regard to the proposition of the Prime Minister that the whole of the revenue produced by an increase in the Excise duties should be paid into the Imperial Exchequer, he must point out that such a proposal was not admissible in point of equity. (Hear, hear.) Ireland contributed in Excise one-eighth of the whole contribution of the United Kingdom, but he contended that in the case of an increase in the Excise the amount of the increase taken by the Imperial Exchequer should not exceed

1-25th, and the remainder should be returned to the Irish Exchequer, to which it would properly belong. With regard to the voting power of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament, when the period during which the Irish Parliament was precluded from dealing with the land question had elapsed, they would assent to any proposition to which Englishmen and Scotchmen might agree as to the mode of limitation. The probability was that when Home Rule was passed the Imperial Parliament would not be troubled with them unless it made some attempt to meddle with Irish affairs. If it should be found that the Imperial Parliament officially and vexatiously interfered in the sphere it had defined for the Parliament of Ireland, or that British Ministers were reasonably suspected (laughter) of attempting to use the veto of the Crown against the rights of the Irish Legislature, then he thought it would be found that the unique position which Ireland occupied, having a Legislature in Ireland and also representatives in that House, would stand them in good stead. (Cheers and laughter.) So far as the scheme was concerned with the framing of a political constitution, it was worth acceptance at the hands of the people of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) The question of finance was one of no mean importance. It would be admitted that the Irish Legislature would be placed in a critical position, especially in its earliest and most difficult years, unless it were founded with means sufficient to enable it to develop a useful policy and to repair in some measure the neglect of the Imperial Administration, and to attempt some urgent practical measures without imposing any fresh burdens on the Irish people. The Prime Minister produced a balance-sheet, and it was desirable that it should be known to what year it related. (Mr. J. Morley.—1892-93.) Then it was an estimate for the year ending the 31st of March next; and, while fully accepting the statement of the Prime Minister, he would ask that as soon as practicable the House should be furnished with particulars of the calculation of the Treasury upon which the adjustment of the several items was founded and also with particulars of the items which constituted the totals of the civil government charges in Ireland. No doubt the financial position was in some respects improved since 1886. Owing to the increase of revenue and the increase of local charges the Irish Government would have a larger fund to administer than in 1886. Under the Bill of that year the fund to be administered by the Irish Government would have been about £3,000,000 a year. Now the civil charges would probably amount to between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 a year; and no doubt with a larger fund greater relative economy would be effected. But such economy was a question of the future, and of a future relatively remote, because he assumed that the arrangements of 1886 would be repeated as to the pay, pensions, and continued employment of civil servants. After considerable examination he could not foresee that any considerable economy would be possible in Ireland for a good many years to come. The scheme of finance now developed was open to three objections. The financial proposals of 1886 met with the strongest objections, and the Irish members gave notice of their intention to contest them in committee. But he would scarcely go so far as to say that the present financial proposals would give to the Imperial Exchequer a larger contribution than was given by the scheme of 1886. In that year the Prime Minister proposed to take out of the revenues of Ireland £2,200,000 a year, and now he proposed to take

£2,350,000. In 1886 the Imperial Exchequer would have been relieved of a contribution of half a million for the Irish constabulary; and now it was proposed that the Imperial Exchequer should continue to bear one-third of the charge for the constabulary as long as there is any charge. Therefore the difference between the two schemes would not be very great. At any rate, he submitted they were entitled to receive more favourable treatment on that point than they had received. In the second place, he contended it would not be generous, nor even fair, to make the occasion of granting autonomy to Ireland, which, while it gave to Irishmen control of their own affairs, would also give Englishmen and Scotchmen control of theirs (ironical cheers), an occasion for extracting from the Irish Exchequer for the Imperial Treasury a larger profit than was now derived (hear, hear); for he undertook to demonstrate upon any series of years—upon which alone they could fairly judge—that the profit to the Imperial Exchequer from Ireland had been very considerably less than the contribution now demanded. In the third place, he said that a surplus of half a million would not be free for the general purposes of Ireland, as he understood was the intention. If the surplus was to be free, the whole cost of Ireland under the head of police would have to be discharged for the sum of one million a year. That, he urged, would be quite impossible, so that the surplus would not be available for the general use of the Irish Government, but would be absorbed, in fact, for a number of years by the cost of the police. In a constitutional settlement, for the wealthiest country in the world to ask the poorest to bear, not only the whole charge for her own local police, but a considerable proportion of the charge for the Imperial police as well, was not only not generous but was not just. In these respects the scheme could not be maintained. But he had the most unqualified confidence in the equitable spirit of the Prime Minister and also in the spirit of the Liberal party who had stood by Ireland so nobly and acted so generously from the beginning of this struggle; and if there was anything more certain than another about the general masses of this country on the question of Home Rule, it would be that they would say—if you give Ireland a native Government and Constitution, give them also the means to carry that Constitution into effect. (Cheers.) He was confident that this Imperial Parliament would not allow any trivial question of this kind to mar the greatness of a Constitution which would secure political freedom for Ireland, by which he meant, first, the rights of the Legislature of Ireland to make laws for the country; and, secondly, the duty of the Government of the country to make themselves responsible to the people. (Cheers.)

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said that most of the members of that House who happened to be present in the year 1886 must almost have felt that the past seven years were but a passing dream. They had had the same scene exactly repeated, the same excitement in the House, the same throng of members to hear a noble oration, and, more wonderful still, they had the same orator (hear, hear), upon whom the hand of time appeared to have no effect (cheers), who showed the same eloquence and the same power of presenting a difficult, nay a desperate case (hear, hear) to the House of Commons, as unflagged and energetic as ever—above all, who had displayed the same determined, unremorseful desire to culminate a great career by the ruin of the Constitution of his country. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) The House was pleased to laugh at what it appeared to think a

figure of rhetoric on his part. (Hear, hear.) As the right hon. gentleman the member for Mid Lothian had given them several quotations from distinguished personages who lived at some remote period of our history and at the beginning of this century, he, in order to justify the remark he had made, might be permitted to read a quotation from a very distinguished member of the House made not so long ago, but within living memory—a quotation from a speech delivered on the Home Rule question by the right hon. gentleman himself. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman said:—

"We are told that it is necessary for Ireland to lose her relations with the Parliament of this country and to have a Parliament of her own. Why new we shall say to the learned gentleman (Mr. Butt), Why is Parliament to be broken up? (Hear, hear.) Has Ireland great grievances? What is it that Ireland has demanded from the Imperial Parliament that the Imperial Parliament has refused? It will not do to deal with this matter in vague and shadowy assertions. (Hear, hear.) I have looked in vain for the setting forth of any practical scheme of policy which the Imperial Parliament is not able to deal with, or which it has refused to deal with, and which is to be brought about by Home Rule. You would expect when it is said that the Imperial Parliament is to be broken up that at least a case should be made out shewing that there are great questions of policy and great demands which the representatives of Ireland had united to ask and the representatives of England, Scotland, and Wales had united to refuse. There is no such grievance. There is nothing which Ireland has asked that this country has refused. This country has done for Ireland what it would have scrupled to do for England or Scotland. (Hear, hear.) What are the inequalities of England and Ireland? I confess I know of none except that there are certain taxes remaining which are levied from every Englishman and Scotchman and are not levied from every Irishman, and that there are public boons which are freely and largely given to Ireland and are not given to England or Scotland. That seems a very feeble basis indeed for the argument that the fabric of the United Parliament of this country is to be broken up. (Hear, hear.) Can any sensible man, can any rational man, suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of the country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind, of crippling every power we possess, and of upsetting the Constitution of the country to which we belong."

(Cheers.) These were the words of the Prime Minister 21 years ago. (Ministerial cheers.) He would ask the House, he would ask hon. gentlemen below the gangway, what, during the course of these 21 years, had proved these assertions of the right hon. gentleman to be false? What had this country done for Ireland during those 21 years? Could any gentleman deny that during those 21 years Ireland had occupied a foremost place in, and obtained a considerable share of, the attention of Parliament? (Hear, hear.) Could any one deny that during those years Parliament had sought to wipe out by legislation these sad memories which existed among her people? Was it forgotten that in order to satisfy the demands of the Roman Catholic priests, Parliament swept away the Irish Church? (Hear, hear.) Could it be denied that, in order to secure the position of the Irish tenants, Parliament gave them more than half the possession of the lands they held; or that this country had ad-

vaneed many millions of money to help to make the Irish tenant owner of the lands he tilled? (Hear, hear.) No one could assert that during those 21 years that House had not done its best to redress the grievances of which Ireland complained. (Hear, hear.) What, then, had changed the mind of the right hon. gentleman? The answer to that question was supplied by the hon. member for North Kerry, who had just spoken, and who said that it was the 85 Irish votes which made Home Rule an Imperial question. (Cheers.) It was not because justice was involved; it was not because the Irish members had made out a case against the British Parliament. (Cheers and Nationalist laughter.) It was, he repeated, as the hon. member for North Kerry had just said, simply because the Government required the Irish votes, and, having got them, they proceeded to disintegrate, in the language he had just quoted, the great capital institutions of their country. (Cheers.) It would perhaps be admitted that no member of the House had a better right to speak on the question than he had. ("Hear, hear," and cries of "Oh.") He might be a feeble advocate of the cause he served; but no one would deny, at any rate, that he spoke in the name of the loyalty of Ireland. (Cheers and laughter.) The Prime Minister began his speech by saying that there were two methods for the government of Ireland—coercion on the one hand and Home Rule on the other. What did the right hon. gentleman mean by coercion? There was coercion in every civilized country. (Hear, hear.) Unjustifiable coercion was interference with the liberties of law-abiding citizens; justifiable coercion was interference with the criminal population. No Irishman who obeyed the law ever suffered from coercion. ("Hear, hear," and Nationalist laughter.) The right hon. gentleman in 1886 told them that the law in Ireland was discredited because it came before the Irish people in a foreign garb; but he had not that night, after seven years' further experience, given the House one single case in which this so-called coercion pressed unduly or heavily upon any persons in Ireland other than those of the criminal population. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman then went on to inform the House that Belfast, of all towns, ought to accept this Bill. That would be news for Belfast. During the last 110 years Belfast had grown to be the third greatest port in the United Kingdom and was now the capital of loyal Ireland, and he did not think the arguments of the right hon. gentleman would have much weight with the people of Belfast. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman had told them that he recognized the fact that there was a minority in Ireland who needed consideration, and in order to give them that protection which he thought they might require he proceeded to create a council to be composed of 48 members. What the name of that council would be finally he could not say, but he did not believe that it would ever be called into existence. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) The hon. member for North Kerry said he would make the loyal minority a present of the council, and he might well do so, for the majority of that council, if formed, would infallibly belong to the party of the hon. member. Even if the loyalists had a majority in that protective council it would only protect them for a year or two, so that the only protection the loyalists would have under this Bill would be a breathing time of about a year. Then the Prime Minister informed the House that the new Irish nation would start with a capital of £500,000. He considered that a small capital for a new nation.

(Laughter.) He noticed that when the announcement was made there was a deathly silence on the Nationalist benches. When the House bore in mind that out of this sum of money the Irish members, the Irish Ministers, and the evicted tenants would have to be paid they could easily understand that very little would be left. (Laughter.) The hon. member who had just sat down, to whom the Bill had evidently been submitted, had been good enough, in the patronizing way which was peculiar to him, to inform the House that the party which he represented, the number of which it was impossible to know, were satisfied with the Bill with the exception of certain of the financial details. However, judging from the dilatory way in which the occupants of the front Government bench wrote down the objections of the hon. member he gathered that the hon. member had been informed that on certain points the Government were squeezable. (Laughter.) The Bill contained three provisions which, in his opinion, were important; it granted a Parliament in Dublin and an Executive Government; it gave the Irish Parliament power over the Judges and the police, and also over the land—in other words, the power to plunder without the fear of judgment. (Cheers.) He was not going to occupy the attention of the House with the details of the Bill. He did not care, and his people did not care, a farthing about the details. What they opposed, and had opposed all along, was the general principle of granting a Home Rule Government to Ireland responsible to an Irish Parliament. What were the probabilities of the success of the Bill? The only way of estimating them was by an examination of the results of the introduction of the Bill of 1886. (An hon. member.—By Pontefract.) In 1886, when the right hon. gentleman introduced his Bill, there were certain difficulties in the way which ultimately proved insurmountable. First of all, the right hon. gentleman was met with the difficulty which one would have thought the hardest for him to dispose of—namely, the difficulty created by the words which he and his colleagues had recently employed, and by the policy which they had always previously pursued. This difficulty, however, was easily got over, for words and policy were swallowed. (Laughter.) But it was a ticklish task to lead a party accustomed to go one way into an exactly opposite direction. The right hon. gentleman in 1886 might be pictured as driving a coach, which he suddenly turned round, with the natural result that most of the passengers flew off, in obedience to the law of political momentum. (Laughter.) For seven years the right hon. gentleman had tried to persuade the country that to be a Liberal of the modern school one need not hold certain specific opinions, but must follow one's leader without hesitation, even though he called that black to-day which yesterday he called white. (Laughter.) Members of the Liberal party no doubt found it difficult at first to grasp the situation. It would surprise any one, when a man had been pointing in condemnation at a gang of robbers marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire, to see that same man joining their ranks, nay, leading the gang. (Laughter.) Seven years' experience of the Unionist Government had left Ireland—as the right hon. member for Newcastle would admit—a peaceable country (cheers), and when he congratulated that House upon the condition of Ireland he must remember that that condition was due to the fact that the law of the land had been in firm hands and administered with justice and with courage. (Cheers and Nationalist laughter.) There

was one advantage which the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister formerly possessed which he did not possess now, for at that time the right hon. gentleman was able to get up and stand at the box and say that he was dealing with a united party from Ireland which could make terms between himself and the Irish people. Above all he had a leader to deal with who, by his ability, determination, and knowledge of men, had succeeded in reducing the Irish national representation to a harmoniously working machine. Could he do that now? (Cheers.) Who was the leader of the Nationalist party? (Hear, hear.) He concluded that the right hon. gentleman in introducing this Bill desired the country to believe that this Bill would be a final remedy for Ireland's wrongs. Who could get up now with authority on the side of the Irish Nationalists and tell the House that this Bill would be a final settlement? (Cheers.) The experience of the past two years prevented that from being possible. Hon. members would remember how when Mr. Parnell got up in the House he received adoring adulation from the front bench, and how, when the Unionists doubted the fact as stated by him that the Bill was to be received as a final settlement, they were looked upon as Irish bigots. But Mr. Paroell had declared that, far from looking upon Home Rule as a final settlement, he regarded it simply as an instrument for that final settlement of the Irish question which would make Ireland a free country and a free people among the people of the world. (Cheers.) He should like to know how the right hon. gentleman was going to deal with the Nationalist benches in order to arrive at the question whether this Bill was to be final or not. There were two parties—there might be more—below the gangway. He ventured to say that there was only one gentleman below the gangway who had a right to speak in the name of the Irish Nationalist electors, and that was the member for Waterford (laughter) and his eight colleagues (laughter and cheers), for they professed to come to this House returned as the representatives of the voters in their constituencies, for they could speak at all events in their name. There was also another party numbering 71 who did not represent the electors at all (laughter and cheers), and what was more they did not profess to represent the Irish electors. (Hear, hear.) That might appear to be an exaggerated statement. If the House asked him who was the representative of the ecclesiastical party in this House he would say unquestionably it was the hon. member for North Louth. That hon. member, by his ability and his knowledge of Parliamentary tactics, and the position he occupied and assumed to occupy in the House, must undoubtedly be looked upon as the Parliamentary leader of that party. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member who had just sat down was a man of ability, but he only occasionally delighted the ears of the House with a set oration (laughter), but the hon. member for North Louth was always present, and therefore he must be rightly taken to be the leader of that party. (Cheers.) In speaking of the mode in which the Irish elections had taken place, the hon. member had said that candidates came forward on both sides, and, forsooth, if the election was not to be void, the voice of religion must be silent and rights must be exercised according to what was called the right of private judgment, or, as it had been phrased, the right of private stupidity. (Hear, hear.) That was the hon. member's description of an elector who exercised his private judgment. (Hear, hear.) Then the hon. member continued by saying that the

Church had jurisdiction where morals were concerned; and had jurisdiction to decide its own jurisdiction; because every man would otherwise be a lawgiver unto himself; that the candidate, the State, and the Catholics themselves might not like the Catholic doctrine, but that it would not be changed for them. According to the hon. member for North Louth there were two parties in Ireland representing the Nationalist cause. There were the hon. member for Waterford and his followers, who represented the ignorant opinion of the electorate; and there was the holy band of 71 who were the incarnation in the House of Commons, according to the hon. member, of the inherited wisdom of the 12 Apostles. (Laughter.) How was it possible to arrive at the real choice of the Irish people by consulting the hon. member who had just sat down, or the hon. member for North Louth, who had openly confessed that he did not represent the constituency which he was returned to represent, but that he simply represented the voice of the Irish Roman Catholic Bishops? (Cheers.) He himself had not had experience of the inner working of the minds of the Irish Nationalist electors—and that inner working was hard to understand from the representatives which those electors sent to Parliament (laughter)—but if what had been stated was true, it proved that the Irish Nationalist electors, who delegated to the Irish Bishops the right of deciding for whom they should vote, were not deserving of the franchise, and were certainly not deserving of self-government. (Cheers.) In fact these 71 hon. members stood up in the House to speak as patriots, whereas they were really puppets (laughter) who spoke, acted, and voted at the strings were pulled by Archbishop Walsh and his friends. The difficulties of the Prime Minister were greatly increased. He could not say that he knew the wishes of the Irish people; he could only say that he knew the wishes of the Irish Roman Catholic priests. (Cheers.) The question was this—was the Parliament of Great Britain going to alter and destroy the Constitution of the country, not to satisfy the overwhelming demands of the united people of Ireland, but the demands and the overweening assumption of the Roman Catholic clergy? (Cheers.) And how was finality to be arrived at? Who was to say whether the present Bill would be accepted as a final statement? (Hear, hear.) Whenever hon. members for Ireland spoke in the House of Home Rule they spoke in terms very different from those they employed in Ireland. What did the hon. member for East Mayo say two years after the "union of hearts" had taken place? (Laughter.) "I have never hesitated to express my admiration for the men of '67; and I declare that our movement is in all its main principles, and in the great issues at which it aims, the legitimate successor of that movement, as well as of those of '48 and '98. Our objects are the same, although our methods may be different. Our chief object is the liberty of Ireland." If the hon. member for East Mayo took part in the debate, and declared that he was willing to accept this Home Rule Bill as it stood, as a final settlement, would he state to the House that the speech just quoted was absolutely devoid of foundation? (Hear, hear.) Unless the hon. member did so, his acceptance of the Bill would be a fraud. (Cheers.) There was one difficulty which stood in the way of the right hon. gentleman, which he believed would defeat his Bill, and that was that it had been clearly proved to demonstration that at the present moment the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland were the

masters of the political situation. (Cheers.) Of all people in the world to whom the Irish Unionists looked to oppose religious ascendancy, it was to the Radical party; it was religious ascendancy which the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister had in years gone by pointed to as the upas tree that must be destroyed. (Hear, hear.) Ireland had undoubtedly been remarkable in the past for many political curiosities, but the most astounding and most monstrous curiosity that had ever been produced was a priest-ridden and a priest-guided Radical. (Cheers and laughter.) Was that the new doctrine of the Radical party which was declared the other night by the hon. member for South Edinburgh, when he said that it was useless to attempt to prevent people from being led by their priests when the latter told them that their salvation depended upon the way they voted? (Hear, hear.) With their eyes open to the present claims of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland to interfere in elections in that country, did Radical members intend deliberately to hand over the Protestants of Ireland to the mercy of the Roman Catholic priests? The Irish loyalists and the Irish Unionists were amply justified in the position they had taken up in that House in regard to this matter. They refused this sacerdotal yoke in Ireland, as the forefathers of the present Radicals had refused it in England 200 years ago. (Hear, hear.) As regarded this Bill, he could say that it would receive from the Irish Unionist party the strongest and the most uncompromising opposition. (Hear, hear.) The Irish Unionists opposed the Bill, not because they believed it would be injurious to class or to creed, but because they believed that it would be destructive to liberty and property in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) He had no intention in that House at the present moment to utter any threats as to what the Irish Unionists intended to do if this Bill were to become law, but he would venture simply to say that, unless this country was blind, it could not be indifferent to the great manifestations that had occurred in Ireland during the last autumn, when the Irish loyalists made their views known with no uncertain sound. The Unionists in Ireland believed that they had an inheritance in the British Parliament; that under the British Parliament the prosperity of Ireland had increased from year to year; and the right hon. gentleman did not attempt to show that the prosperity of Ireland had decreased since the Union, for he knew that since then the wealth of Ireland had increased twentyfold. The House had no right to destroy that inheritance. They might pass the Home Rule Bill (Irish cheers), but they had not the power to make the loyalists obey it. (Cheers and Irish laughter.) Hon. members below the gangway pointed out, in speeches outside the House, that the loyalists would have to confront the Army; but before the Army of Great Britain was employed to shoot down the Irish loyalists there would have to be a British majority. Fancy the hon. member for Cork, the hon. member for Mayo, and others sitting in a Dublin office giving orders to Lord Wolseley to march with the Army at the Curragh to shoot down the people of Ulster. Such a thing required an imagination stronger than he possessed. They had a minority in Ireland strong and powerful enough, if every soldier were withdrawn from the country, to make the land their own. They would do all in their power, from first to last, to oppose this Home Rule Bill, knowing that they had on their side a majority of the British nation. And when the measure was fully understood by the country it would be received with the same ridicule

as it met with that night in the House of Commons. ("Oh.") They would confidently appeal to the sympathy and support of every man who loved the name of freedom.

On the motion of Mr. BALFOUR, the debate was adjourned until to-morrow.

REGIMENTAL DEBTS (CONSOLIDATION) BILL.

This Bill was read a second time.

ASSISTANT COUNTY SURVEYORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On the motion of Mr. JOHNSTON, this Bill was read a second time.

KITCHEN COMMITTEE.

A Select Committee was appointed to control the arrangements for the kitchen and refreshment rooms for members of the House.

SIR J. FERGUSSON complained of the unsatisfactory accommodation and service in the dining-room. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. TANNER congratulated the right hon. baronet on his tardy conversion to the importance of this question.

Mr. A. C. MORTON hoped that a balance-sheet of the committee would be produced.

Mr. CONYBEARE trusted that an investigation would be made into the scale of charges for dinners.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS said that it was inadequate accommodation in the kitchen which caused the delay in attendance. He promised to have the question looked into.

The following were appointed members of the committee:—Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Agg-Gardner, Lord Burghley, Mr. Cremer, Mr. Fellowes, General Goldsworthy, Mr. Grenfell, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Leveson-Gower, Mr. Loder, Mr. M'Arthur, Mr. P. J. Power, Mr. Alfred Thomas, and Dr. Tanner.

The House adjourned at 10 minutes past 12 o'clock.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill and London Streets (Removal of Gates, &c.) Bill were read a second time.

NEW WRIT.

On the motion of Mr. MARJORIBANKS, a new writ was ordered to be issued for Gateshead, in the room of Mr. W. H. James, now Lord Northbourne.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS.

Mr. GARDNER,—Bill to confirm a scheme, under the Metropolitan Commons Act, 1866 to 1878, with respect to Orpington Commons, in the county of Kent; and Bill to confirm a scheme, under the Metropolitan Commons Acts, 1866 to 1878, with respect to Banstead Commons, in the county of Surrey.

Mr. BURNIE,—On this day four weeks, to call attention to the increase in railway rates, and to move a resolution. (Irreconcilable Opposition cheers.)

Mr. BROOKFIELD,—On this day four weeks, to call attention to the report of the Select Committee on Industry, and to move a resolution.

Mr. T. G. BOWLES,—On the Civil Service Estimates, to call attention to the persistent withholding by her Majesty's Government of the papers and correspondence relating to the Russian occupation of the Pamirs, and to move a resolution.

Mr. T. SHAW,—On this day four weeks, to call attention to the subject of the payment of members, and to move a resolution.

SIR M. J. STEWART.—On an early day, to move that a humble Address be presented to her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the production, manufacture, and export of opium from India, and to move a resolution.

PUBLIC WORKS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

MR. WEIR asked the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the fact that the sum of £10,519 only was expended during the financial year 1891-2 on useful works out of the grant of £47,000 under the Western Highlands and Islands (Scotland) Works Act, 1891, and that the cost of administration amounted to £1,560, arrangements would be considered to reduce the exorbitant administrative charges of the department; and whether greater efficiency and despatch could be effected in carrying out works under the Act.

SIR G. TREVELYAN.—Before any works whatever could be commenced in the Highlands it was necessary to examine into every project presented and to report fully upon it. To carry out such an examination £1,560 was not an exorbitant charge. In the estimates for next year there will be a large reduction in the salary of the chief appointment in this branch of administration. Owing to the formalities required by the Highlands Works Act, there are undoubtedly great delays in the beginning of every separate work. But that stage has now been passed in the case of a certain number of works, and before the end of next year material progress will have been made.

PROFESSORS OF THE QUEEN'S COLLEGES IN IRELAND.

MR. M. J. KENNY asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether the "65 Rule" applied to the presidents and professors of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland, and, if so, how many had been retired under its operation; how many had been specially exempted until 70; and whether any other than those so specially exempted continued to hold office.

SIR J. HIBBERT.—The question whether any particular office is within the operation of the clause of the Order in Council to which the question refers can only be decided by a competent Court of law. Pending such a decision, the Treasury is of opinion that the presidents and professors of the Queen's Colleges are within the order, and no payment from a vote of Parliament will be made to any professor who is over 65 years of age, unless his service has been continued by the Treasury under the special power given to them by Clause X. of the Order. The services of two professors have been thus continued. I am not aware how many others are over 65 years of age.

NAVAL ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT, DEVON-PORT.

MR. LUTTRELL asked the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether there were men employed in the Naval Ordnance Department at Bull Point Powder Works, Devonport, who were only receiving 16s. a week; and whether, taking into consideration the character of such employment, he would take steps to secure that all men there employed should receive the same advantages in respect to pay as those in her Majesty's dockyards.

MR. E. ROBERTSON.—There are 50 labourers employed at the Naval Ordnance Store Department at Bull Point receiving wages of 16s. a week. Evidence respecting the rate of wages has recently been taken by the Secretary of the Admiralty and myself, and is receiving careful consideration.

SHIPS' SIDE-LIGHTS.

In reply to Mr. T. G. BOWLES,

MR. MUNDELLA said,—The existing regulations do not say that the side-lights shall show over ten points of the compass only, but that they shall show a uniform and unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of ten points of the compass, and to attain this it is absolutely necessary that they shall show with diminished light over the slight excess of arc to which the hon. member refers. There is no discrepancy between the Board of Trade instructions and the Order in Council.

THE CASE OF MR. CHARLES WILSON.

MR. CAINE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been called to a report in the *Daily Chronicle* of the 9th of February, in which Mr. Sheil, the magistrate of Westminster Police-court, bound over Mr. Charles Wilson in his own recognizance of 40s. to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for three months, because he tried to make his way along the footwalk of Sloane-street; by what authority the metropolitan police stopped the walking public from using the footpaths of thoroughfares in front of churches when weddings were being held, turning them into the roadway among the carriages; and whether he would at once cause Mr. Wilson to be released from his recognizance.

MR. ASQUITH.—The metropolitan police are responsible under the Metropolitan Police Acts for keeping order in the thoroughfares, and it is the custom when a number of persons assemble to witness any public or private function that the constables on duty should give every facility to persons who wish to pass through the crowd. I am informed that the defendant in the case referred to refused the proffered assistance and insisted on attempting to push forcibly through the people on the pavement, though the police were ready to make way for him in another direction. Under the circumstances I do not feel justified in interfering. (Opposition cheers.)

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES asked whether it was a fact that the police prevented Wilson from proceeding along the public footpath.

MR. ASQUITH.—The facts are as stated in my answer to the question on the paper.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES gave notice that in consequence of the right hon. gentleman's answer he should call attention to the matter on the first opportunity. (Opposition laughter and ironical cheers.)

THE LOCAL TAXATION BUDGET.

MR. LEIGHTON asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the importance of keeping Parliament informed of the total amount of the burdens imposed by local as well as Imperial authority, before the Estimates were passed, the Government would make arrangements for a statement to be delivered on local taxation and indebtedness as soon as possible after the annual Budget statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. H. FOWLER.—A somewhat similar question was asked by the hon. member last year, and the reply of the then First Lord of the Treasury was that the great complexity of local expenditure, the very large number (28,000) of the local authorities from whom accounts had to be obtained, and the length of time necessarily occupied in the audit of those accounts made it impossible to present to the House, in connexion with or shortly after the Budget statement, a statement of the expenditure and indebtedness of local authorities similar to that furnished

with regard to Imperial finance. In that opinion I quite concur. Very full and detailed statements as to local expenditure and indebtedness are furnished by the local taxation returns presented to the House.

CHELSEA HOSPITAL AND KILMAINHAM.

COLONEL HUGHES asked the Secretary of State for War whether he would consider the advisability of discontinuing the indoor pensioners at Chelsea Hospital and Kilmainham, and (following the example of Greenwich Hospital) providing in lieu thereof from the funds and property available out pensions, to enable the men to live with their friends in their old age.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—This question was very carefully considered by a committee a few years ago, and it was found that the general sentiment of the Army was in favour of maintaining these asylums for infirm and helpless old pensioners. I may add that, in the event of their abolition, the property of these hospitals would not enable a provision to be made for pensioners at all equal to that which was available for Greenwich Hospital pensioners, the foundation in the latter case having been much more wealthy.

Mr. BURNS inquired whether, considering the dissatisfaction that the abolition of Greenwich Hospital gave at the time to sailors in the Royal Navy, the Secretary of State for War would, before any question of closing Chelsea Hospital was discussed, ascertain the feeling of soldiers and non-commissioned officers in her Majesty's Army in respect to the matter; and whether he was aware that the proposal was regarded as a scheme of land speculators and jerry-builders to do away with one of our best and oldest institutions?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that, whatever conclusion might be arrived at in regard to the matter, the jerry-builder and land speculator would have nothing to do with it. Upon the general part of the question, he desired to state that, whatever the ultimate decision might be, it would be largely based upon the feeling of the soldiers themselves.

BOILERS IN WARSHIPS.

In answer to Mr. FORWOOD,

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH said,—The information obtained by the Committee on Boilers, who have recently concluded their most valuable labours, was partly of a strictly confidential character; and the report upon this evidence cannot therefore be made public. But, knowing the interest which my right hon. friend has taken in the subject during his tenure of office at the Admiralty, I shall be glad, privately, to show him the conclusions of the committee.

THE POST OFFICE IN SCOTLAND.

In answer to Mr. PARKER-SMITH,

Mr. A. MORLEY said,—It is not intended to make any administrative changes in the Post Office in Scotland, but, on the retirement of the present Surveyor-General, it is intended to abolish that title and to revert to that of Secretary.

BOUNTIES ON SPIRITS.

Mr. SNAPE asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether bounties were allowed on the export of any other articles than plain and sweetened spirits; whether he was aware that the bounty allowed on these exported spirits frequently amounted to a profit of 12 per cent. on their value; and whether, in view of the fact that in the last financial year a bounty of £28,538 6s. 5d. was allowed to distillers and exporters of plain spirits, and of £9,159 17s. 9d. to the compounders and exporters of the flavoured spirits, which were chiefly

exported to the natives of uncivilized lands, he would arrange in his Budget proposals for their abolition?

SIR J. HIBBERT.—Nothing which can be regarded as a "bounty" is given on the exportation of plain and sweetened spirits. An allowance of 2d. per gallon on plain and of 4d. on compounded spirits is paid by the Government on the exportation of spirits, as compensation for the increased cost of production resulting from the excise restrictions on the processes of distilling and loss in rectifying. These allowances have been the subject of repeated consideration, and there appear to be no grounds for reconsidering them at present.

In answer to a further question by Mr. SNAPE,

SIR J. HIBBERT said,—I have already stated that it is not considered that spirits on export receive any bounty. They are freed from duty. We do not charge our foreign customers our own duties, and to do so would destroy the export trade on articles subject to duty here.

THE PROPERTY TAX.

COLONEL HUGHES asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would consider the desirability of levying the property tax on the net instead of on the gross ratable value, to avoid levying the tax upon repairs and other outgoings.

SIR J. HIBBERT.—This is a very proper matter to be considered in connexion with the exemption of real property from the duties to which personal property is liable.

DIFFERENTIAL DUTIES IN BRAZIL.

MR. HOLLAND asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether discriminating duties are still levied in Brazil against certain imports from Great Britain, and in favour of those from the United States; and, if so, whether he will endeavour to obtain more favourable treatment for British goods?

SIR E. GREY.—The duties referred to continue to be levied, but the disability under which British trade with Brazil suffers in this respect has not ceased to receive the attention of her Majesty's Legation at Rio de Janeiro as well as of the Foreign Office. As yet, however, the Brazilian Government have not been willing to conclude a commercial treaty with this country, or to grant complete most-favoured nation treatment to British trade.

THE LABOURERS IN IRELAND.

MR. TUITE asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why the report of the Local Government inspector, who held the inquiry under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts at Mullingar in September last, has not as yet been furnished to the guardians of that union.

MR. J. MORLEY.—The Local Government Board report that the inquiry referred to was held in November. The inspector who conducted the inquiry employed a local reporter to take notes of the proceedings, and, notwithstanding that repeated applications have since been made to the reporter for a transcript of his notes, he has failed to furnish it. The guardians have been informed of the circumstances, and the question of holding a fresh inquiry is now under consideration. The delay is, of course, to be regretted, but the local reporter is entirely to blame for it.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

In answer to Mr. PINKERTON,

MR. J. MORLEY said,—The Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary reports that the number of men serving as constables who entered the force before the Act of 1866 is approximately 197. These

men will be eligible to receive full pension (two thirds of pay) on serving 29 years, and there has not been anything special in their services to warrant exceptional treatment in regard to pension.

ACCIDENT TO A GYMNAST.

MR. COHEN asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been called to the fatal accident which occurred to a gymnast at Leicester on the 8th inst., due, as reported in the papers, to the defective arrangements provided for the protection of the performers in case of accident; and, whether he can see his way, either by legislation or circular letter, to oblige those who are responsible for these entertainments so to adapt their arrangements that they shall not fail, just in the event of accidents arising against which they are intended to provide.

MR. ASQUITH.—My attention has been called to the accident in question, which I much lament. I have, however, no power to put a stop to exhibitions or performances which are dangerous to the performers but not necessarily dangerous to the spectators. On previous occasions where accidents have occurred the Secretary of State has caused warnings to be given through the police, requiring the persons responsible for the entertainment to take all proper precautions, and in one case the absence of a net under the performer was pointed out as a special source of danger. In this case there was a net, the property of the father of the gymnast, and it had been placed in position before the performance. The verdict attributes the death to accident, without any reference to any faulty arrangement of the net. I am afraid I cannot undertake any legislation on the subject, but the attention of the police is always directed to these performances and they do what they can to insure precautions being taken.

PENSIONS IN WOOLWICH ARSENAL AND DOCKYARD.

COLONEL HUGHES asked the Secretary of State for War why pensions for workmen at Woolwich Arsenal and Dockyard have been abolished since June, 1890, although continued for men on the establishment in other dockyards.

MR. WOODALL, who replied, said,—The hon. member will find a full explanation of the circumstances which led to the arrangement in the report of a Select Committee of this House which sat in 1889. The report will be found in Sessional Paper 197 of that year; and effect was given to the recommendations of the committee by the Act 53 and 54 Vic., cap. 18.

THE SCOTCH SUSPENSORY BILL.

In answer to MR. J. A. CAMPBELL,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—I shall introduce the Bill regarding the Established Church of Scotland with an explanatory statement and at a time when hon. members would have an opportunity of remarking on that statement.

THE TRANSPORT OF TROOPS.

In answer to MR. PARKER SMITH, CAPTAIN M'CALMONT, and SIR J. FERGUSSON,

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said,—I greatly regret the discomfort which was undoubtedly experienced by the Royal Scots Fusiliers on their recent voyage to Dover in her Majesty's ship Assistance. The weather was exceptionally bad, and the time occupied was 3½ days, during a great part of which the men had to be kept below, the most of them prostrated by sea sickness. The commanding officer considered that the ship was overcrowded, and one can easily believe that in such circumstances as I have stated the num-

bers were too great for comfort. By the Admiralty returns, however, the vessel is shown as having accommodation for 200 more than the number actually on board. One blanket per man was served out, and when it was proposed to apply for an additional one the men declared it unnecessary, owing to the heat below. The death which occurred on board was due to apoplexy. As regards the efficiency of this vessel for transport coastwise, she was expressly built for the purpose, but I am bound to admit that complaints have been received, in regard to which I propose to confer with the Admiralty.

THE "FAIR WAGES" CLAUSE.

COLONEL HUGHES asked the First Commissioner of Works whether he stated to a deputation of unemployed that he would insert in the contract for the removal of Millbank Prison a condition that the unskilled labourer should be paid 6d. an hour.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE.—I would refer the hon. and gallant member to the report in *The Times* of November 29 last of my reply to the deputation from the unemployed which waited upon me on the previous day on the subject of the demolition of Millbank Prison. I said that in order to prevent "sweating" there would be a clause in the contracts, in accordance with the resolution of the House of Commons, that the contractors were to pay the men they employed the current wages. I did not mention any definite rate of wages.

NAVAL COURTS-MARTIAL.

MR. T. G. BOWLES asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he proposed to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the constitution and procedure of naval Courts-martial and the practice of the Admiralty in regard thereto, and, if not, whether he would agree to a motion for the appointment of such a committee.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH.—No, Sir; it is not the intention of the Government to propose or support a motion for an inquiry such as the hon. member suggests at the present time.

AYR ACADEMY.

In reply to MR. BIRKMYRE,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—The Ayr Academy, under the Minute of the Scotch Education Department of January 31, and on the recommendation of the county committee, may receive a grant possibly as high as £200 for the general purposes of the school without any conditions except those of efficiency. Next, in respect of any number of free pupils a capitation grant of £6 may be paid for each pupil. This proposal was recommended to the committee of last year by the Rector of Ayr Academy. For anything beyond this the committee were of opinion that before a school should share in the grant of £60,000 it should be required to make the education it offers more extensively available by a reduction of fees. This principle is a very important one as a guarantee that the grant shall not be absorbed by schools which charge a large fee and are consequently available only for a limited class.

THE INQUIRY INTO AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

MR. CHAPLIN asked the President of the Board of Agriculture when the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into agricultural depression would be placed upon the paper; and, whether he would undertake that adequate time would be afforded for consideration of the terms of reference before it was proceeded with.

MR. GARDNER.—The motion will be placed upon

the paper as soon as there appears to be any prospect of making progress with it; and opportunity will then be given for considering the terms of the reference.

SWINE FEVER.

Mr. YERBURGH asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the statement contained in the report of the assistant-inspector to the veterinary department of the Board of Agriculture for 1891, that "swine fever existed in 1891 in 47 counties in England, 12 in Scotland, and seven in Wales; 5,595 outbreaks were reported, 32,349 swine were attacked during the year, of which 15,229 were slaughtered, 14,112 died, 3,399 recovered, and 340 remained diseased at the end of the year;" and of the fact that effectual dealing with swine fever was of vital importance to the agricultural labourer, he would reconsider his decision to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the subject, and would, without delay, in accordance with the resolution passed unanimously at the recent Agricultural Conference, include swine fever in the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts.

Mr. GARDNER.—The object of the mover of the resolution to which the hon. member refers was, as I understand it, to recommend, not that swine fever should be included in the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, for this is already the case, but that the execution of the law and the payment of compensation for swine slaughtered should be transferred from the local authorities to the Board of Agriculture, as was done with great advantage in the case of pleuro-pneumonia. The conditions under which swine fever is contracted and spread are, however, very different, and, before I can propose legislation on the subject, I deem it essential that an investigation should be made by a Departmental Committee which can elicit the views of the various interests concerned. A similar committee sat prior to the introduction of the Pleuro-Pneumonia Act. I may add that a very considerable diminution of the disease was shown during 1892, the number of swine attacked being only 13,957, as against 32,349 in the previous year. The disease, in fact, reached the lowest point recorded since 1884.

THE TUBERCULOSIS COMMISSION.

Mr. YERBURGH asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the recent Agricultural Conference having unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that tuberculosis should be included in the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, he had taken any steps to secure an early report from the Royal Commission upon Tuberculosis.

Mr. GARDNER.—We have frequently been in communication with the Royal Commission with regard to this matter, and every endeavour is being made by them to expedite the completion of their work, so far as is compatible with complete scientific investigation of the questions committed to them. The Commission are well aware of the interest and importance which attach to the subject.

CADET SERVANTS AT THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY.

In answer to COLONEL HUGHES,

Mr. WOODALL said.—There are practically three classes of cadet servants employed at the Royal Military Academy. (a) Pensioners appointed before June 10, 1884, and who are earning increase of pension in these posts, get 14s. a week, but it was decided in December last that this rate is to be increased to 16s. from April 1 next, provision for which will be made in the Estimates for 1893-4. (b) Pensioners appointed

on or after June 10, 1884, and who are not earning increase of pension, will under the same decision get 18s. a week from the commencement of the next financial year. (c) Civilians will get 18s. a week from the same date. The Governor of the Royal Military Academy was informed of the decision on December 7, 1892. In no case do these servants receive 21s. a week. There are two pensioners employed as butlers who get 21s. 6d. and 19s. 3d. respectively. All live outside the Academy, with the exception of four pensioners, who are specially employed. These cadet servants are on duty every day in the week during term—week days about 12 hours, and Sundays about six hours, and their pay is continuous outside term time.

COLLISIONS AT SEA.

In answer to Mr. T. G. BOWLES,

Mr. MUNDELLA said,—The existing regulations for preventing collisions at sea, and those recommended by the Washington Conference, are shown in parallel columns in Appendix A of Parliamentary paper C 6,664, 1892. Since the conference the subject has been carefully considered by a committee composed of representatives of the Admiralty, Board of Trade, Trinity House, and the shipping trade, whose reports contained in Parliamentary papers C 6,293, 1891, and C 6,833, 1892, have been adopted by the Admiralty and the Board of Trade. The regulations for fishing vessels are separated from the general international regulations, and as regards the latter I do not think there is any occasion for further delay, or that there exist objections which have not been considered by the committee. I shall, however, be ready to receive any observations on the subject from the hon. gentleman.

THE "LEGITIMIST JACOBITE" LEAGUE.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been called to the publication on January 30 of the first number of a newspaper, the *Jacobite*, the organ of the so-called "Legitimist Jacobite League," in which the wife of Prince Louis of Bavaria was styled "Mary IV." of England, and spoken of by the secretary of the League as "England's rightful Queen, who will soon enjoy her own again"; and whether the establishment of such an organization at this juncture would be taken notice of by her Majesty's Government.

Mr. ASQUITH.—Her Majesty's Government do not propose to give factitious importance to a foolish and ephemeral craze. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.")

Mr. JOHNSTON asked whether it was a fact that Jacobite clubs were being formed in various parts of the country.

Mr. ASQUITH replied that he was unable to answer the question.

THE WELSH SUSPENSORY BILL.

Mr. TALBOT asked the Home Secretary whether he would undertake that the Bill relating to the Established Church in Wales should not be introduced except at a time when there would be ample opportunity for the discussion of the motion.

Mr. ASQUITH.—The motion for leave to introduce the Bill will be made at such a time as will admit of its being discussed at reasonable length.

Mr. TALBOT.—Will it be the first order of the day?

Mr. ASQUITH.—We cannot say until we see what the course of business is.

Mr. LEIGHTON asked the Home Secretary what would be the position of endowments granted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under existing Acts of

Parliament, and according to their usual practice, in the event of the Suspensory Bill (Wales) becoming law; and whether any action had already been taken by the Government in the matter.

Mr. ASQUITH.—The hon. member must allow me to postpone the answer to the first part of the question until I have an opportunity on moving for leave to introduce the Bill of explaining its provisions. The Government have no power to control the action of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but the individual members of the Government who are Commissioners will probably feel it their duty to endeavour to check any unnecessary augmentation of vested interests in the Welsh Church.

Mr. LEIGHTON asked whether any official letter was sent to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Mr. ASQUITH.—Not so far as I am aware.

NIHILIST REFUGEES.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND asked the Home Secretary whether he had observed the statement in the papers that the Russian Nihilists recently arrested in Paris were taken to Calais under escort and placed on board the Dover steamboat for England; and whether he would take steps to prevent such characters landing in England in future.

Mr. ASQUITH.—A representation was made to the French Government by Lord Rosebery as soon as the alleged deportation of the persons mentioned to this country was brought to his knowledge; but on inquiry being made it appears that the men in question were simply ordered to leave France, and their crossing to Dover was due to their own choice.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

Mr. MACARTNEY asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his attention had been called to the resolution of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, at their last meeting, urging the slaughter of all foreign cattle landing in the United Kingdom at the port of debarkation; and whether, in view of the fact that 41 cases of pleuro-pneumonia had been discovered amongst cattle imported from the United States since July last, and that the landing of two cargoes of infected Canadian cattle had led to the slaughter of 1,394 animals, and was instrumental in subjecting 79 different localities in Scotland to the danger of fresh infection, and necessitated the payment of £18,130 in compensation, he would introduce or support a measure to make such slaughter compulsory at the port of debarkation.

Mr. GARDNER.—I have received the resolution to which the hon. member refers. It will be my duty to explain the views of the Government on this subject when the motion which the hon. member has placed on the paper is under discussion, and I am unable in the meantime to enter into any undertaking to the effect proposed in the question.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSON asked whether the state of the hop and fruit industries would be within the scope of the reference to the Select Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. GARDNER.—I have already stated to the House that the reference will be of a general character.

Mr. CHAPLIN asked whether there would be any objection to lay the terms of the reference at an early period.

Mr. GARDNER.—I have already stated to the right hon. gentleman that a motion will be made as soon as the progress of public business allows.

DRILL-HALLS OF VOLUNTEERS.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND asked the Secretary for War whether he would introduce a Bill to exempt drill-halls belonging to the Volunteer force from the payment of all Imperial, local, and other rates and taxes, or whether he would give facilities for any Bill brought in by a private member to effect that object.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—This is a question which I have not yet considered. The Treasury and the Local Government Board would have to be consulted; and I see no chance of legislation, even if it were found desirable, during this Session.

SUSPENSORY BILLS FOR SCOTLAND AND WALES.

Mr. HOZIER asked whether the Government proposed to proceed first with the Suspensory Bill for the Church of Scotland, or with the Suspensory Bill for the Church in Wales.

SIR G. TREVELYAN.—The Government will not at present make any announcement with regard to the priority of Government Bills. When the state of public business promises to admit their introduction due notice will be given.

WAR OFFICE CIRCULAR AS TO WAGES.

COLONEL HUGHES asked whether the War Office circular of December 17, 1881, had yet been rescinded as to the following paragraph:—"The rate of wages at which the men are found willing to engage themselves for employment must be taken to be a 'full market rate,' it being optional with the men to accept or refuse such wages."

Mr. WOODALL.—No, Sir. The circular in question has not been rescinded. Its object was simply to determine that men engaged at what was understood as the "full market rate" of wages were not entitled to superannuation.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT INQUIRY.

In reply to Mr. KEARLEY,

Mr. MUNDELLA said,—The inquiry now in progress by the Labour Department is in the first instance to ascertain the wages paid in all Government departments and to compare the same with the rates of wages paid for similar work outside, and to report thereon for the information and consideration of the Government.

KEW GARDENS.

SIR R. TEMPLE asked the First Commissioner of Works whether he could state the result of the committee of inquiry, ordered by his department last Session, regarding the *status* and emoluments of the men employed in the Royal Gardens at Kew.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE.—The departmental committee to which the hon. baronet refers have within the last few days made their report. They do not advise any general increase of the wages of the labourers at Kew Gardens, but they have made various minor suggestions which are now under the consideration of the Office of Works and the Treasury.

REGULATIONS FOR SIDE-LIGHTS.

In reply to SIR G. BADEN-POWELL,

Mr. MUNDELLA said,—The new regulations for side-lights of ocean vessels are already in operation. (Hear, hear.) They apply both to British vessels and foreign vessels within British jurisdiction. The new regulations do not differ from, but are explanatory of, the British regulations which have been accepted by foreign Powers. The Board of Trade have not considered it necessary to obtain the approval of the representative shipping associations in the various ports to an Order in Council, which, as I have already stated, is merely explanatory.

THE HOME RULE BILL AND IMPERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

Mr. BALFOUR asked whether, under the Home Rule Bill, the contributions from the Imperial Exchequer to local purposes in Ireland were to be continued; and, if not, what were to be the securities to the British taxpayer for advances under the Land Purchase Acts.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—My answer is, that the contributions from the Imperial Exchequer to the local revenue of Ireland will cease; but the Bill creates, in the first place, a first charge on the Irish Consolidated Fund in favour of the British Exchequer for the repayment of any sums issued under the Purchase of Land Acts to meet the interest or the sinking fund for the guaranteed land stock. The Bill further provides a summary method for the recovery from the Irish Exchequer, without any direct intervention of the proper Irish authority, of any sums due to the exchequer of the United Kingdom.

TENURE OF IRISH LAND.

LORD G. HAMILTON asked the First Lord of the Treasury when he proposed to introduce the Bill to deal with the tenure of Irish land—a question specially reserved from the Irish Parliament, which it was intended should meet for legislative purposes in September next.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—There is a casual error in the question. Of course the provision in the Bill does not refer to September next, when possibly, judging from the appearance of business at the present time, Irish members must be usefully occupied here. (Laughter.) The Bill is intended to refer to September, 1894. My answer to the substance of the question is this. I did not, in addressing the House yesterday, signify any intention on the part of her Majesty's Government to introduce a Bill with respect to Irish land. I do not think this is the opportunity for me to discuss the question whether the circumstances of the present moment are or are not the same as the circumstances of 1886 with regard to the important subject of Irish land. Nor will I say either Ay or No as to the obligation of any Government to introduce, before the period when the Irish Legislature will be competent to deal with the subject, a measure here. But, undoubtedly, her Majesty's Government have not signified and do not entertain any intention of bringing in a Bill in relation to Irish land to run contemporaneously with the present Bill. (Cheers.)

LORD G. HAMILTON said the right hon. gentleman had the previous day stated, parenthetically, that the Irish land question was reserved for the Imperial Parliament, and asked whether the reservation also applied to the administration and enforcement of the existing land laws in Ireland, and whether such administration and enforcement would remain in the hands of the Imperial Parliament or be transferred to the Irish local assembly.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—The administration of the land laws in Ireland would follow the usual course of the law in that country, and therefore it would be in the hands of the local authorities. (Nationalist cheers.) In referring to the reservations to the Imperial Parliament, I should also have stated that there is an exception, the propriety of which will be generally recognized, and that is the fact that nothing will be understood to prevent the Irish Legislature from acquiring land under proper conditions for public usage. (Cheers.)

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

COLONEL HUGHES asked the First Lord of the

Treasury whether he would consider the advantage of saving the time of the House by printing the answers to questions of which ample notice had been given.

Mr. GLADSTONE, who on rising was received with loud Ministerial and Nationalist cheers, said.—I am very conscious that inconvenience does happen, and has already happened, to some extent, in our short experience of the present Parliament, by reason of the great number of questions asked. Those, however, who are most sensible of the inconvenience are also those who put questions which, no doubt, under a strong sense of public duty they find it necessary for them to lengthen. (Laughter.) I think our experience of the Session is too short to justify us in moving at present. I fully agree that the matter deserves attention and that it is right that her Majesty's Government should, if necessary, take the initiative on the subject, but obviously anything that is done, or is proposed to be done, should represent the general sense of the House and not merely that of the party in office, and be likewise in accordance with the authorities. (Cheers.)

WALSALL ELECTION.

SIR H. HOWORTH asked the Attorney-General whether he had considered the grounds upon which the election at Walsall was declared void, and the divergence of the ruling of the Judges in that case and the cases of Stepney and East Clare; and, whether, in view of the precedent created by the former case, in which a member not only lost his seat, but had to pay very large costs for an act whose legality had been hitherto unquestioned, he could see his way to legislating during the present Session so as to make the law more definite; and, if not, whether the Government would consent to the appointment of a Select Committee of that House to report upon the question; and, in that case, if he would include in the inquiry what might be the best means to prevent the issue of an election depending upon the accident of a clerical or accidental error in the voting paper (such as the omission of the official stamp), due not to the fault of the voter, but to the fault of one of the officials.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—I have considered the grounds on which the election was voided. I cannot admit that there is any doubt about the law that the Judges have declared—namely, that if payment for the purpose of promoting the election is made either for cards, ribaubs, and other marks of distinction, such a payment is an illegal payment, and any contract made to pay it is illegal, and that if such payment is brought home to the candidate or election agent the election is void. The difference of opinion has not been as to what the law is, but as to whether in the particular cases the facts contravened the law. The Government, therefore, do not propose either legislation or an inquiry. As to the official errors which are referred to in the question they are not likely to recur.

Mr. J. REDMOND asked whether in the East Clare election petition the so-called mark of distinction was not proved to be totally distinct in every respect from that in the Walsall case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—My recollection hardly enables me to say, but I think the hon. member is correct in his statement.

CASUAL WARDS IN CHELSEA.

Mr. WHITMORE asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the announced intention of the Government to introduce at an early

date measures to effect a radical reform in the administration of the Poor Law and its present management, he would refrain from enforcing the erection of casual wards in Chelsea until the new system of Poor Law had been established.

Mr. H. FOWLER.—The announcement of the intention of the Government to which the hon. member refers would not justify me in neglecting to enforce the decision of my predecessor with reference to the erection of casual wards in Chelsea. Mr. Ritchie decided that it was the duty of the Chelsea guardians to provide these wards, and that, in the event of their refusing to make that provision, it was the duty of the Local Government Board to take the necessary steps to carry out the law. In that decision I concur.

SCHOOL FEES IN IRELAND.

Mr. JACKSON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could inform the House the number of national schools in Ireland; the number of such schools in which school fees had been entirely abolished under the Education (Ireland) Act, 1892; and the number (if any) in which school fees had been partly abolished.

Mr. J. MORLEY.—I am informed by the Commissioners of National Education that the number of national schools in Ireland to which section 18 of the Education (Ireland) Act, 1892, applies is 8,234; that of these, school fees have been entirely abolished in 7,163, and partially abolished in 1,071.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION.

In answer to MAJOR RASCH,

Mr. ASQUITH said,—Under the Police Act the police authority is required to deduct from the pay of every constable in the force sums at a rate not exceeding 2½ per cent. per annum on his pay, which deductions under the Act are paid to the credit of the Pension Fund. A balance-sheet of the Pension Fund for the year ended March 31, 1892, was laid before Parliament on the 2d of May last.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. GLADSTONE moved:—“That the motion for leave to introduce the Government of Ireland Bill do have precedence of the orders of the day and notices of motion on every day on which it may be appointed.” The right hon. gentleman said that if the precedence was afforded it was not the intention of the Government to apply it to private Bills on Wednesdays.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE asked what business the Government proposed to take when the Home Rule Bill was read a first time.

Mr. GLADSTONE said he was not precisely aware at the present moment which was the more urgent, the necessity for Supply or the necessity for proceeding with other measures. He would, however, endeavour to give the best information he could at the earliest opportunity.

COLONEL HUGHES said he was sorry that the course of business had rendered it necessary to postpone his motion, which was first on the paper that evening. The motion, which had reference to the rate of wages paid to Government *employés*, was of very great importance, and he appealed to the right hon. gentleman on behalf of his former constituents at Greenwich, of whom he was sure the right hon. gentleman cherished many associations of a personal character (a laugh), to give him another opportunity, say after Easter, when his motion might be proceeded with.

Mr. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN, as also represent-

ing a dockyard constituency, joined in the appeal of the hon. and gallant member.

Mr. KEARLEY also supported the appeal.

Mr. BARTLEY thought there should be a distinct understanding as to private members' days. It should be distinctly understood that all the private time of the House was not to be taken away. There had been a good many complaints on the subject during the last six or seven years. (Ministerial cheers.) He had made the same remark when he sat on the other side of the House, and then his strongest supporters were the supporters of the present Government. (Hear.)

Mr. GLADSTONE thought the demand of the hon. gentleman who spoke last a reasonable one. In answer to him he had to say that her Majesty's Government had asked the House to agree to this motion simply on the ground of the paramount importance of the great subject introduced into the House last night, and they did not entertain any intention at this early period of the Session to make a similar request in regard to measures of secondary importance. With regard to the question of dockyard labour, the labour question was already provided for by a notice given by the right hon. gentleman the member for the University of Cambridge, who still retained a recollection of his older loves. (Laughter.) It would be in the power of hon. gentlemen to extend the right hon. gentleman's motion so as to include those descriptions of labour not yet included in it. At any rate, the hon. and gallant gentleman who had appealed to him might safely be assured that he would have an opportunity of discussing the question to which he referred on the Naval and Military Estimates. As to the hon. and gallant gentleman's request for time after Easter, he would rather make a little more progress towards Easter before he took such a request into consideration.

The motion was then agreed to.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

Mr. GLADSTONE then moved:—“That this House do meet to-morrow at 2 of the clock.” He was aware, he said, that there were hon. members who did not agree with him in making this motion, but he would only say that in old times the hours of the House on Wednesdays were the same as on other days. In 1853 only was the system altered. This motion was then introduced by a Liberal Government, and it had continued to be made without interruption up to the present time. He would not venture to appeal to his friends on his side of the House in virtue of their general sympathy with him in political questions to extend that sympathy to a motion of this character, but he had thought it right to make the motion, not only as fortified by custom, but also as a rational motion.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said he invariably voted for the motion in the last Parliament because there was a Conservative majority, and he felt it would be far better for them to go to church than to waste their time in fruitless discussions which led to nothing. (A laugh.) To-morrow a very important Bill in regard to the qualifications for election to local authorities was coming on. Many hon. members wished to take part in the discussion, and if the House did not meet until 2 o'clock it would be impossible to get through the debate and to take a vote on the Bill by 6 o'clock. In those circumstances he felt bound to go to a division against the motion. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman said this was an old custom, but it was certainly one of those customs which were better honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Mr. CONYBEARE suggested that the difficulty might be met by the chaplain holding a service at 11 o'clock to-morrow morning in the chapel under St. Stephen's Hall.

The House divided, and the numbers were—

For the motion	...	...	...	307
Against...	...	...	...	161
Majority for	...	...	...	—146

THE CRUSH IN THE LOBBY ON MONDAY.

Mr. SHEEHY asked the Speaker's leave to introduce a personal question. He wished to know whether, in view of the extremely dangerous and most unseemly crush—

Mr. JOHNSTON.—I rise to a point of order. I do not think the House—

The SPEAKER.—Order, order. It is quite true that public business is before the House, but I thought the hon. gentleman had risen to a point of order, and I was unwilling to interrupt him under these circumstances.

Mr. SHEEHY asked whether, on the next similar occasion, the Speaker would kindly allow members to take their seats as early as they cared to arrive. (Cries of "No, no.")

The SPEAKER.—The arrangements on these occasions are made to suit the general wish and convenience of the House; and, though the arrangements yesterday were not entirely successful, yet their deficiencies have been greatly exaggerated. (Cheers.) One hon. member, who was reported to have been dangerously injured, and whom I saw this morning, told me that he stepped into the House with great alacrity, and secured a very favourable seat. (Loud laughter.)

NEW BILL.

Mr. CORBETT obtained leave to introduce the following Bill, which was brought up and read a first time:—Bill to amend the Acts relating to Reformatory Schools in Scotland.

THE HOME RULE BILL.

The adjourned debate on Mr. Gladstone's motion for leave to bring in the Home Rule Bill was resumed at five minutes past 5 o'clock by

Mr. BALFOUR, whose rising was received with continued cheers from the Opposition benches. He said.—Before I come to the discussion of that measure which, amid such high expectations and such intense curiosity, was presented to us yesterday by the Prime Minister, I must ask the attention of the House to a preliminary question with which the right hon. gentleman himself dealt during the first part of his speech, and which is assuredly not without vital importance when the House is asked to give leave for the introduction of this measure. Before we ask ourselves whether the measure is good or is bad, whether it is consistent in its parts, whether it does or does not fit in with the ancient Constitution of these realms, we have a right to put the inquiry, Why is any Bill, good or bad, required on this subject at all? (Cheers.) That is a question to which the right hon. gentleman has addressed himself on two famous occasions. He addressed himself to it in 1886, when he originally introduced his first proposal for the better government of Ireland, and he addressed himself to it again last night. The circumstances under which the right hon. gentleman introduced these two proposals were different, and he was forced, therefore, to give a different answer in 1893 to that initial and fundamental question from the answer which he gave to it in 1886. Seven years ago the right hon. gentleman laid the whole stress of his argument upon this point—the absence of

social order in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) He told us that juries were not to be trusted to do their duty; that evictions, just or unjust, were alike looked at with suspicion by the agrarian population. He gave us statistics of Irish agrarian crime during the last 50 years; and the whole result of his argument was to show that, in his opinion at all events, the alternative before the House was either Home Rule, as he conceived the measure, or else the continuous operation of a drastic Coercion Bill. Seven years have elapsed. Is a drastic Coercion Bill at this moment in operation in Ireland? (Nationalist laughter.) And if it is not in operation, do we then see the consequence which the right hon. gentleman foreshadowed—namely, that social order cannot be preserved? (Cheers.) Does he still find that Irish juries cannot be trusted to do their duty; that the agrarian question is insoluble, and that landlords cannot get their rights? We all know that the right hon. gentleman who sits next to the Prime Minister—the Minister who is responsible for the Government of Ireland—told us on the Queen's Speech debate only a few nights ago that never was there a time when rents were better paid in Ireland; and so great was his confidence in the manner in which Irish juries might be expected to do their duty that he would not even retain that provision for the change of venue which his colleagues had declared already existed in Scotland. (Cheers.) Therefore, the dilemma which the Prime Minister placed before us in 1886 is shewn by conclusive experience to be no dilemma at all; and though I admit that the Crimes Act is still on the Statute-book, though I admit that it is there ready to be called into operation should the necessity arise, and though I do not wish to minimize the importance and the significance of that fact, still the right hon. gentleman is reduced by the logic of events to this conclusion—that it is necessary to shake to its foundations the ancient Constitution of this country, not because coercion has to be in active operation in Ireland, as the only alternative, but because you have on the Statute-book an Act which may or may not be brought into operation. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman must feel that a Bill of this magnitude is hardly to be justified by a position of affairs such as that; and that he cannot come down to that House and ask to put before us again the alternative which he presented with so much plausibility to our notice in 1886—namely, that you have to choose between Home Rule and the constant operation of drastic coercion. (Hear, hear.) I should like to ask whether, if there is any force in the argument as to the admitted necessity of having a Crimes Act in reserve, it is an argument which points in favour of or against the policy which the right hon. gentleman asks us to adopt. (Hear, hear.) The necessity for a Crimes Act by universal admission arises from one of two causes. It arises either out of the chronic agrarian condition of Ireland, or it arises out of the fact that it is possible, owing to the unhappy condition of the land question in that country, for persons, with a political object to serve, to stir up the embers and re-ignite the flame of criminal agitation throughout Ireland. (Cheers.) I do not care which of these alternatives you choose. Whichever of them you choose it points not to the necessity of Home Rule but to the impossibility of having Home Rule. (Cheers.) It points conclusively to the fact that until this agrarian question be finally put out of the way it is criminal (Ministerial cries of "Oh!" and loud cheers) to attempt to set up in Ireland a Legislature which is to be practically inde-

pendent of the Imperial Parliament. If the right hon. gentleman takes the view that the difficulty of the agrarian question is the real difficulty in the way of social order in Ireland, how can he possibly expect that that difficulty is to be put out of the way by the action of an Irish Parliament, unless he is prepared to see the agrarian question settled by the destruction of the unpopular minority who happen to be co-ordinated in the possession of the land? How can he for a moment adopt a policy which hands over to the gentlemen below the gangway—who, to do them justice, have never concealed their view of the agrarian question—which hands over to them the settlement of these controversies, which, if they are to be settled fairly at all, surely must be settled by the wisdom of an Imperial Parliament, representing constituencies in the United Kingdom which have no immediate personal or traditional views on the subject? (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman tells us that the mere presence on the Statute Book of a Crimes Act is a breach of the pledges given at the time of the Union by which equal laws were promised to the two countries. The right hon. gentleman gave us no proof at all that any such bargain was entered into. He quoted a Bishop, an Under-Secretary, and a still higher authority, Mr. Pitt. He quoted Mr. Pitt to show that in his opinion the result of the Union would be equal laws for the two countries. Does the right hon. gentleman suppose that Mr. Pitt had in mind or could have had in mind the question of special laws for repressing crime? Does he think that Mr. Pitt would have thought it worth while to promise to the Irish Parliament about to be abolished that no future Crimes Act would be passed? Does he think that the Irish Parliament would have thanked him for such a pledge? Why, that very Parliament passed more Crimes Acts—(Mr. Gladstone).—In the last five years. Nationalist (cheers)—I do not believe that the inception of special criminal legislation by that Parliament was in the last five years, but granting that it was my argument is not affected. The alleged pledge given by Mr. Pitt was, I presume, at the time of the Union. If during the five years preceding that the Parliament to whom he was supposed to have promised not to pass special criminal legislation had been occupied—as it had by the right hon. gentleman's own admission—in passing many Coercion Acts, is it credible that Mr. Pitt could have had in mind legislation of that sort? No; it is evident what Mr. Pitt had in his mind. He had in mind those shameful fiscal laws by which the British Parliament had during the last century endeavoured, with only too much success, to stifle Irish industries for the benefit of English industries, and he promised the Irish, and that promise has been most faithfully kept, that no fiscal legislation after the Union should be allowed to take effect which would give any advantage to the British manufacturer as against his Irish rival. That promise was made and kept. If ever a time should come when unequal laws are established in Ireland in connexion with native industries these laws will undoubtedly take their origin and find their root in the very proposal of the right hon. gentleman. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman based his recommendation of some Bill establishing Home Rule in Ireland upon the majorities returned in Ireland in favour of such a measure. Upon that I have two observations to make. The first is that the right hon. gentleman was fairly warned when he brought in his Reform Bill of 1884 what the consequences would be, that he had those con-

sequences fully in view, and that, with all that knowledge before him, he said that the English majorities were not likely to be moved by the fact that the change in the Irish representation might send a very largely augmented number of Home Rulers to assist in our deliberations. The right hon. gentleman said:—“Why are we told that 400,000 persons added to the constituencies in Ireland are to carry all before them and are to prevent us from exercising in this or future Parliaments an independent judgment on the connexion of the two countries? Why are we to be told this when we bear in mind that if there are 5,000,000 persons in Ireland there are 30,000,000 in Great Britain, that if there are 400,000 or 500,000 persons going to be added to the Irish constituencies 1,500,000 are going to be added to the English constituencies? Why, then, should we be afraid to look in the face the hon. member for Cork and all his coadjutors?” (Cheers and counter-cheers.) Well, the hon. member for Cork and his coadjutors came down to this House 80 or 90 strong, and the right hon. gentleman was afraid to look them in the face. (Cheers.) With all the English and Scotch constituencies behind him he has ever since been afraid to face the majority which he called into existence, and to which before it came into existence he expressed so much indifference. (Hear, hear.) I have another question to ask the right hon. gentleman with reference to this part of the subject. For my own part I think that the only sound constitutional way of estimating the public opinion of this country is to count the votes in the House of Commons without too curiously inquiring from what country they come. That is a principle I approve; but when you are going to adopt another principle, I say let us adopt it in its entirety. (Hear, hear.) Why are we to look to the Nationalist majority in Ireland and not to look to the loyal majority in Ulster? (Cheers.) By what right are you going to cut off Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom, on the ground that the majority in an arbitrarily selected area wants Home Rule; by what right are you going to do that if you refuse to apply the same principle to Ulster? (Laughter from the Nationalist members and cheers.) When the Protestant part of Ulster with an absolutely unanimous voice declares not merely its aversion, but its utter abhorrence of the measure you have proposed (cheers) then apparently majorities no longer count; then their objections become a mere local ebullition of public feeling; then you are entitled to disregard them; then it even becomes our duty to put this local majority under the heel of another majority which they abhor and detest. (Cheers.) If the right hon. gentleman desires to consider this Assembly as representing a homogeneous kingdom well and good. If, on the other hand, he means to cut up this Assembly, and say to its members, “Some of you represent such a district; others represent such another; others, again, represent a third,” and so on, then I say by every rule that he himself has laid down Ulster deserves exceptional treatment in this measure, of which, however, I do not find one single trace. (Cheers.) I pass now from my examination of the general considerations with which the right hon. gentleman introduced the Bill to such criticisms as the necessarily scanty outline which we have of the Bill as yet enables me to make. In the first place, let me ask a question or two on a matter not, indeed, to be compared in importance with the vast constitutional issues at stake, but with which, nevertheless, the

honour of this House is very deeply concerned, and in dealing with which I am convinced the right hon. gentleman will have to take more precautions than I gathered he has taken already. I allude to the question of the future of the constabulary, the Civil Service, and the Judges. As I understood the speech of the right hon. gentleman yesterday, supplemented as it was by the speech of the hon. member for North Kerry, who appeared to be not less minutely familiar with the Bill (laughter and cheers), the plan of the Government is that in a very few years—we do not know how many—the Irish Government are to be allowed to say of such or such a district, "We are prepared to supply the police for this district," and then the displaced constabulary are to have the choice of either entering the service of the Government in Ireland or of being disbanded on terms more or less favourable. Well, if anything like that is done very gross injustice will be perpetrated. The constabulary hold their positions under a variety of statutes binding the honour of this House. By entering the force they have cut themselves adrift from all the ordinary means of gaining a livelihood; they have put themselves under a strict discipline; they are not allowed to marry without leave; they can, of course, make no preparations for entering any other profession. They have looked forward, on the faith of the terms under which they were engaged, to certain rights when their term of service should be accomplished. I am quite unable to see how, if you are going to disband any part of this force within a reasonably brief period, you would be doing anything but breaking a public engagement and would be committing on them a very gross hardship. (An hon. member.—No, no.) The hon. member has seen the Bill and I have not.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR.—I said "No, no," and I have not seen the Bill.

Mr. BALFOUR.—I now come to another class. The Civil servants entered the service of the State largely by open competition. They entered the service of the Imperial Parliament and not of any Home Rule Parliament. If these proposals pass into law the Civil servants in Ireland will be cast upon the world without any adequate compensation.

Mr. HEALY.—No, no.

Mr. BALFOUR.—Well, that is so under the hypotheses I am pointing out. Vows of vengeance have been uttered by hon. gentlemen in Ireland since the present Government came into office. I have myself seen an article, signed by the hon. member for Cork, in which he advocated, in the strong language habitual to him (laughter), that he and his friends would clear out Dublin Castle, which, in other words, implies the dismissal of all the Civil servants now employed there. The case will not be met by saying to the Civil servants in Ireland:—"Either you serve under the Home Rule Government or take yourselves off." Something much more than that must be done—and done at the Irish expense (hear, hear)—unless you are going to be guilty, in regard to these Civil servants, of some such species of injustice, as in the case of the constabulary. I am aware that in 1886 the right hon. gentleman made the most absolute profession with regard to the constabulary. But in 1886 he also made strong professions in regard to the landlords in Ireland. He then told us that it was a matter of honour to settle the land question (hear, hear) before giving Home Rule to Ireland; and he

then told us, also, that it was a matter of duty to see that the constabulary were not compelled to change their masters. (Hoar, hear.) Honour has now gone by the board (loud cheers); I only hope that duty is not going to follow it. (Renewed cheering.) Another class of officials to which I wish to refer are the Judges. If I rightly understood the present Government proposals they amount to this, that for six years the Judges are to be appointed by the Imperial Executive, but are to be paid by the Irish Exchequer; and this is what the right hon. gentleman called a joint appointment. I presume that no existing Judge will be liable to be dismissed, except on the joint petition of both the legislative bodies in Ireland.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—Yes.

Mr. BALFOUR.—I am glad to hear that. Now, I want to ask what chance have you of getting good men to take the place upon those terms, or, if good men be found, that they will be able to execute justice in the high places? We all know the sort of attacks that are made at home by Irish politicians who are going to form your first Executive Committee of the Privy Council. (Hear, hear.) I suppose what will happen is this. A Judge gives a just sentence, which is also an unpopular one. He unseats, perhaps, some member for Meath—. (Laughter.)

Mr. GLADSTONE was understood to say that election petitions would be decided by the Exchequer Judges.

Mr. BALFOUR.—Well, then, I will say that one of the newly-elected Judges gives an unpopular decision, say, upon the agrarian question, whereupon a motion is promptly made to reduce the Judge's salary; and every time an Irish Judge gives an unpopular decision he becomes a poorer man. (Loud laughter.) So that at last Irish Judges will get to understand that they are paid by the job (cheers), and the exact amount of quiescence which they show (hear, hear from the Irish members) is to determine the amount of salary. (Hear, hear from the Irish members, and interruption.)

The SPEAKER.—Order, order.

Mr. BALFOUR.—Although that policy appears to be received with approval by some hon. gentlemen below the gangway—(Renewed interruption.)

The SPEAKER.—Hon. members must preserve order.

Mr. BALFOUR.—I leave this question now and come to the character of the new Government proposed to be created by this measure. As I understand it Ireland is to be mapped out into three different kinds of constituencies. It is to be divided into 80 constituencies for purposes of representation in the Imperial Parliament; into 103 constituencies for purposes of representation in the Irish Parliament; and into 48 for purposes of the Legislative Council. Well, a mere extraordinary and complicated device could hardly be imagined. A man would find himself voting for the Imperial Parliament in one constituency, for the Irish Parliament in another, and for the Legislative Council in a third. This may be a small matter (Irish cheers), but it shows the kind of complexity in which you will find yourselves helplessly entangled if you endeavour to carry out this extreme inversion of our Constitution. I now turn my attention to the Legislative Council, which is the substitute for that anomalous Second Order which figured in the Home Rule Bill of 1886. Will the present proposal be more effective or more suited to stand the fire of Parliamentary criticism? In the first place, your main object in constituting it is, according to your own view, to protect minorities. But the minority which, above all others, most requires to be protected is the

minority concerned with the ownership of the land. I cannot see in the proposed Legislative Council any adequate protection for the owners of land in Ireland. The vast majority of the constituencies will be identified, not with the ownership, but with the occupancy of the land. And, let this be recollect, the Imperial Parliament will have to undertake the invidious task of determining the relative proportions of the profits which are to be taken by the owner and the occupier. That, again, on the part of this House, will be fraught with the questions of utmost difficulty, and is, in fact, fertile in danger. It is hard to administer justice when the Legislatures have a personal interest in the result. ("Oh, oh" from the Irish members.) How can you expect in these two bodies you propose to create that you will have justice done to that minority who form the easiest objects of plunder? The sinister forecasts which I have made I could supplement with quotations from almost every hon. gentleman who sits on that bench opposite. What protection will be found in the Legislative Chamber to be elected by one class interested in this question? I do not see how by the exclusion of occupiers of less than £20 value you will alter the matter for the better. But suppose this Legislative Chamber carries out the objects with which it was created; suppose it does withstand the unjust legislation which will be successfully carried out in the Lower Chamber, will it be allowed to exist? Do you believe that in such circumstances that part of your paper constitution will be allowed to stand? Why, if there is one thing more certain than another it is this, that any safeguard based upon the property qualification is worth little more than the paper it is written on. The whole tendency of your legislation, the whole tendency of democratic thought, is, rightly or wrongly—I do not inquire, and it is not material to my argument to determine—set upon sweeping away all these arbitrary distinctions founded upon wealth and upon wealth alone, and therefore if your Chamber is to prove effective it will become the object of much concentrated attack in Ireland, backed up by such concentrated attack here, that my own belief is that it must give way at the first onrush of popular fury. I do not say that makes it worthless; I do not say the weakest barrier is not better than no barrier at all, but to come down and pretend that in your Legislative Chamber you have provided anything like a safeguard of the minority even on other subjects than the land, is to ask us to ignore every lesson which the history of democratic institutions is capable of affording us. (Cheers.) While the Legislative Council thus affords but a feeble and precarious barrier against the danger which you justly anticipate, while it will not be able in the long run to put a bit in the mouth of the representative assembly, you provide in your veto, as it appears to me, an instrument which will not indeed be a chronic or permanent safeguard to anybody or to anything, but which will be capable of occasional use in a manner which must produce the profoundest irritation in Ireland (hear, hear) to that section of the Irish population whom you expect your Bill to please. If I understood the right hon. gentleman's proposal rightly it amounted to this. The Lord Lieutenant was to be appointed for six years, the Lord Lieutenant will have the power of the veto. The power of the veto is as an ordinary matter to be exercised in concurrence with the Irish Cabinet, that Cabinet which in his explanation the right hon. gentleman called the Executive Committee of the Privy Council. But on other occasions not

specified the veto is to be exercised, not in accordance with the wishes or advice of the Irish Cabinet, but in accordance with the wishes and advice of the English Cabinet. Until we see the classification of the questions in which the British Cabinet are to have the power of stopping all Irish legislation, it is impossible for us to pronounce with certainty as to how the scheme will work, but it certainly does appear to me that for the first time an endeavour will be made to lay down constitutionally the manner in which the Sovereign, either directly or through her Viceroy, is to take advice. At present the constitutional practice is that the Sovereign has but one set of advisers; there is no question of a choice between advisers. So long as the Ministers of the Crown are in office the advisers of the Crown are those Ministers. Under the new Bill you are going to give her two sets of advisers.

Mr. GLADSTONE was understood to say that under the colonial system the Sovereign had 20 sets of advisers.

Mr. BALFOUR.—I will come to the colonial system presently. We are not discussing the constitutional formula of our colonial system, but the practical working of this Bill. (Cheers.) And if the Crown is to have liberty to decide whether the Crown shall take the advice of the Irish or of the English Ministers, it appears to me that you will greatly increase the power of the Crown to begin with, because you will give it this right of alternative choice and that you will land yourself in very great embarrassment. Let us suppose some case arising in Ireland upon which English Ministers of the Crown take a very strong opinion exactly opposite to the opinion taken by the Irish Ministers. The Irish Ministers give the Viceroy the advice not to withhold the veto; the English Ministers advise her Majesty to withdraw her Viceroy unless he will promise to veto the Bill. Both sets of Ministers announce that they will resign unless their advice is followed. It appears to me it would then rest with the Crown to decide whether she will lose her Irish Administration or her English Administration. Let us suppose that she decides to lose her Irish Administration, then the veto is given not in accordance with the advice of Irish Ministers, but in accordance with the advice of English Ministers. You have deadlock in Ireland and things go smoothly in England; but if, on the other hand, the Crown takes the opposite course then things will go smoothly in Ireland, but not in England. In the first place, it is evident you will very greatly augment the power of the Crown, and in the second place, that you will bring into existence a state of things which might at any moment produce deadlock either in your Irish Government or in your English Government. (Cheers.) Now, I think I have put my point clearly enough; there may be an answer to it in the Bill, or perhaps the right hon. gentleman, the greatest historical and constitutional authority in this House, who is going to follow me may be able to explain how the difficulty is to be got over. But do not let the right hon. gentleman talk to us of colonial Legislatures. (Cheers.) I shall show him directly that this question cannot be argued as if Ireland in any respect resembles a colony; nor will any English Ministry who know their duty consent to be excluded from the consideration of Irish affairs in the same manner in which we consent to be excluded from the consideration of colonial affairs. That brings me directly to the question of Imperial supremacy. We understand that in accordance with all the speeches and declarations that have been made, Imperial supremacy is to figure

largely upon the surface of this Bill. It is to be introduced it appears in the preamble. I never heard before that the preamble was so important a subject, and my hon. and learned friend who made that brilliant attack upon the Bill last night (cheers), and who speaks with an authority upon these legal questions to which I can lay no claim, has told us it often happens that the preamble of a Bill is inconsistent with the contents of the Bill, and that no Judge in such circumstances troubles his head as to what the preamble might say. (Laughter.) But what we want to know is, not whereabouts in the Bill there is the declaration made about the Imperial supremacy, but whether that declaration is a barren declaration, or whether it is an operative declaration. (Cheers.) Supremacy is nothing unless it be supremacy over the unwilling as well as over the willing. (Cheers.) Supremacy is nothing if it be merely a paper supremacy, and I hope the right hon. gentleman who follows me may tell us whether in this Bill there is to be merely a barren declaration that we, the Imperial Parliament, are to have the same sort of control over Irish affairs which we now exercise over Canadian and Australian affairs, or whether our supremacy is to be a real and operative supremacy—a supremacy carrying with it duties and carrying with it rights, a supremacy which is to be exercised, and exercised in conformity with the will of Ministers of the Crown. We heard a great deal last night, and I think on other occasions, from members representing Ireland. "We are quite ready to accept Imperial supremacy on the understanding that an honourable bargain"—I think that is the phrase—"is entered into between the Imperial Government, on the one side, and the Irish Government on the other, that that supremacy shall practically never be exercised." So far as I can speak for those who agree with me in political matters, no such bargain is possible or will be admitted. (Cheers.) If the supremacy of Parliament be indeed preserved in this Bill, that supremacy, if we have any control over the matter, shall, as far as we can manage it, be an operative supremacy. (Cheers.) We shall not consent to allow this weapon for the exercise and maintenance of justice to rust in our hands, and if we can we shall do something to mitigate the evils which we foresee will result from the establishment of an Irish independent Legislature. Depend upon it, we shall not neglect our duty. (Cheers.) Then, what will be the necessary result of this supremacy, coupled with this occasional power of veto on behalf of the Crown? Whenever there is a Government in office depending upon the 80 Irish votes, they will come down and say, "The Irish must manage their own affairs; it is quite true that great injustices are being committed upon the helpless minorities; we deplore it, but we cannot prevent it." But if another Government comes in, not dependent upon the 80 Irish votes, they will take a different view of their duty. They will say, "We represent the Imperial Parliament, which is supreme in Irish matters; we cannot avoid the exercise of the powers which have been intrusted to us; we should be failing in our duty were we to do so"; and then I should like to know how far gentlemen who now clamour for this Bill will feel that they have got that for which they have all along demanded. Hon. gentlemen must be aware that when they ask for a Colonial Legislature and a Colonial Constitution they are asking for that which the whole history of this country and the geographical position of the three kingdoms render absolutely impossible (cheers), and which if it were not rendered impossible

by these considerations, would be rendered impossible by the Bill we are discussing. I say that for this reason. In the Colonial Legislatures we really have no concern with anything whatever of the colonial interests, save only the conduct of foreign policy, in which they have but little concern, and in which they feel but comparatively little interest. Under the Bill of the right hon. gentleman we shall be concerned with the whole fiscal policy of Ireland; we shall be concerned with the whole foreign policy of Ireland; we shall be concerned with the finances of Ireland; and we shall have Irish members in our midst. We shall not be able to avoid discussing—endlessly discussing—Irish questions. (Cheers.) Under these circumstances is it not folly to suppose that any party in this House having the power of intervention in Irish affairs will refuse to exercise that power, or that, if they refuse to exercise it, they will not be held accountable for their *laches* by public opinion in England and Scotland? So the result will not be a continuous intervention in the affairs of Ireland as we now have, not a steady discussion of Irish policy in this House, but a spasmodic interference according to the balance of parties—an interference now vanishing into nothing, now rising into a great factor in political considerations. (Cheers.) I cannot conceive anything less calculated to give to Ireland that independent control of her affairs which the right hon. gentleman desires, or to satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people or to induce the smooth working of Parliamentary institutions. (Cheers.) This question derives an enormously increased importance from the fact alluded to, but not dwelt upon either by the right hon. gentleman or by my learned friend himself—the fact, namely, that under your new constitution the Irish members in this House may have—usually will have—a determining voice in the constitution of the British Cabinet. This argument is familiar to the House. It has been largely used upon platforms, and depend upon it if the Irish members are retained when this Bill gets into Committee, which I greatly doubt, a great deal more will be heard of it still. The right hon. gentleman must see that the whole tendency of constitutional change during the last 150 years, or almost 200 years, in this country has been to throw more and more into the Cabinet of the day—a body not recognized by our Constitution—the whole control not merely of our foreign affairs, but of the programme of legislation which is to be laid before this House. Formerly a great deal of legislation was done by private members. Everybody knows now what private members' legislation means. It means the siring of a certain number of topics, possibly interesting and possibly not interesting, the decision of the House upon certain principles connected with them, and the relegation to another Session of any final decision upon the subject. (Hear, hear.) Government Bills and Government Bills alone are the Bills that pass (hear, hear), and the determination of whom your Government is to be composed, and the determination of what your Bills are to be, is the most vital and most important question which either this House or this country can possibly have to determine. Yet we are actually told that this vital, this essential question is to be determined not by those who are interested in the legislation but by 80 gentlemen who are not. (Cheers and laughter.) They it is who will decide who shall occupy the Treasury Bench, who are to be the Ministers who shall bring in Bills, and what are the Bills that shall be brought in; and how vain is it to tell us that they will not be allowed under their con-

stitution to discuss or to vote upon the Bills, when they carry out the far more important function of determining what the Bills are to be and who shall have charge of them? (Hear, hear.) I think that the right hon. gentleman takes the sound view of this question when he holds that his own scheme is impossible of execution. (Cheers.) Nobody could doubt who heard the admirable balance of academic opinion which he gave us last night on which side his own inclinations were. I am convinced that of the two impossibilities the right hon. gentleman has himself chosen the least impossible, but that in obedience to the view of his colleagues he has put in the Bill the more impossible; and of these two impossible alternatives I think the House, if we ever come to vote upon the matter, will finally decide upon rejecting the one which the right hon. gentleman has embodied in his proposal. (Hear, hear.) I turn now to a question upon which we have still a great deal to learn—on which we have more to learn, perhaps, than on any other subject, from the Bill when it is printed—I mean the financial proposals. I do not pretend to have thoroughly grasped—I do not think the right hon. gentleman would suppose that anybody could thoroughly grasp—the character of these proposals in the course of his statement. I do not blame the right hon. gentleman, of course, but I should like to ask any member of the Government who may speak to tell us, in the first place, how it will be possible to collect income-tax in Ireland without either depriving the Irish Government of income-tax which they ought to get, or depriving the British taxpayers of income-tax they ought to get. At present the whole income-tax is collected on railway and stock of that description, either in Dublin or London, or in the other great centres. The right hon. gentleman gave us no suggestion as to the way in which he was going to get over the extreme difficulty which must arise if you continue to collect in Dublin the tax upon securities the interest upon which is paid in London, and if you collect in London the tax on securities properly held in Ireland. That is a matter very complicated and difficult, upon which I hardly expect at this stage of the debate we can have much information from the Government, or that it can be very usefully discussed. I come to the much broader and much more important question of the Irish contribution to the Imperial purse, and I think upon that point I did understand the proposals of the Government. If I am right they amount to this, that the Customs duties in Ireland just about amount to the share of Ireland, the debt of Ireland, estimated now by the right hon. gentleman to the British purse; that we were to collect them, to take them, and whenever in the future we want to get more out of Ireland we should have to raise the Customs duties, and whenever the general share of Ireland appears to be in excess, then we shall have to diminish the Customs duties. Is that correct?

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I did not touch upon that point at all.

Mr. BALFOUR.—The right hon. gentleman truly says he did not touch upon that point, but at all events he did tell us that the Customs duties were to represent the whole interest of England in the share which Ireland paid us. (Hear, hear.) I think we have a right, even at this stage of the Bill, to ask, How are we ever going to deal freely with our Customs duties in the future, how are we going to modify our taxation, when fiscal and general considerations may require us to modify them? There is a whole school of politicians who desire to abolish the

Customs duties altogether. They go in for what they call "a free breakfast table." Supposing these gentlemen were to agree with the 80 Irish members in this House to vote against the Customs duties. (Laughter and cheers.) Supposing they were to succeed in carrying out their policy, the result of that would be, not only that there would be a free breakfast table, but also that Ireland would be saved from any contribution whatever. (Cheers.) It follows also, so it seems to me, upon the broad principle laid down by the right hon. gentleman, that no alteration, however minute, in our Excise or Customs—and they hang together, recollect, in regard to every commodity which may be produced at home and abroad—no alteration could be made without either cheating Ireland of something which she ought to obtain, or cheating ourselves of something which Ireland ought to give us. How the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the future is going to manage the difficulties of his Budget under a system like that I confess utterly passes my comprehension. I do not believe that this House will ever consent to hand over for ever its own power to deal freely with its own taxation, and nothing less than that is required by the proposal of the right hon. gentleman. (Cheers.) Compared with that the bonus of £500,000 a year which the right hon. gentleman has given to Ireland may appear trifling, and I think it is trifling. But I ask how is even that £500,000 a year to be provided? The right hon. gentleman said, "You ought to be liberal to Ireland." I am all for being liberal to Ireland when Ireland is in the same firm with ourselves. (Cheers.) So long as we are partners here (cheers), I am not only not averse, but I think I have shown that I am in favour of a policy that will place at the disposal of the poorer country some of the resources of the richer country. But we are going to cut off all connexion, with regard at all events to internal affairs—we are going to make a clean division between the two countries. Then, Sir, I think a little less generosity and a little more justice will not be out of place. (Cheers.) I confess I am very sceptical as to whether it will be found, when the figures come to be examined, that our payment to Ireland is not greatly in excess of the £500,000 which the right hon. gentleman estimates it at in his own proposal. What is this £500,000 a year given for? It represents a capital of £17,000,000. Why is this country going to hand over £17,000,000 to Ireland without any return? (Cheers.) The only explanation is that the right hon. gentleman says that we have been engaged in a contest with the forces of lawlessness and disorder, that we have been beaten in that contest, and, according to the right hon. gentleman, a war indemnity is now exacted from us. (Loud cheers.) For my part, Sir, I object to paying that war indemnity. (Renewed cheers.) I do not admit that we have been beaten. I think that if that contest recommences it will have the same termination as it has had already, and that the resources of civilization will again be found equal to the task imposed upon them. (Cheers.) We are now perhaps in a position to estimate what are the profits to all concerned in this speculative constitution which the right hon. gentleman wishes to force down our throats. Let us go through the parties in Ireland first. As to Ulster, we know what Ulster thinks. (Cheers.) The owners of land—I think we can conjecture what they think, for, observe, with regard to the land question you not only propose to hand over to the Irish Parliament the whole settlement of that question after three years, but

you propose immediately to give them executive control. I say without hesitation at all the man who has control of administrative machinery can plunder to the last farthing from every landlord in Ireland. (Cheers.) The member for Kerry last night, in language to which I listened with astonishment, seeing that there are still ringing in my ears words and utterances of a very different description—he told us that the party to which he belongs desire to deprive no man of his liberty and no man of his property. (Laughter.) When did the party of which he is a member become converts to that opinion? (Cheers.) The men who desired to sweep landlords off the face of the earth, the men who devised the system of boycotting, apparently are now equally desirous of preserving the property and the liberty of the people. The hon. gentleman must be aware that the landlords are likely to attach more weight to the pre-utterances of his friends in Ireland than to the politic statement made across the floor of the House; and the landlords, at all events, cannot see in the prospect of this Bill anything than the certainty of illimitable plunder. (Hear, hear.) The civil servants and the constabulary I have already dealt with. They, at all events, are not likely to approve a measure which, under one disguise or another, proposes to hand them over with what compensation we know not yet, to masters whom they have never bargained to serve, who have never hesitated to say how they will use the power of administration when once it is confided to their hands. (Hear, hear.) So much for the loyal portion of Ireland. How about the disloyal portion? Are they likely even to find in this Bill the goal of their desires? They have never hesitated to tell us in the frankest manner what they desire. Even up to the last few months they have stated that they wish to see Ireland a nation among the nations of the world. (An Irish member.—“Hear, hear,” and laughter.) They look back to '97 (cries of “'98”), '48, and '68—(Mr. T. P. O’Connor.—“'67. You are wrong in all your dates,” and laughter)—men who avowedly desired to lead to complete separation as their ideal. Are they likely to be content with an arrangement, whatever protestations they may make—and their protestations appear now to be feeble—an arrangement which, according to the Bill, I presume would deprive them of any power of raising a Volunteer force, of any power of managing trade, any power of dealing with the great branches of taxation, any power of managing their own telegraphs and post-office—

Mr. GLADSTONE.—Any power of fixing the rates.

Mr. BALFOUR.—That is not an unimportant portion of management (cheers)—any power of dealing directly or indirectly with foreign Powers. Are they likely to be content with a scheme which, in addition to these limitations, hampers their domestic legislation by a Legislative Council elected upon a high and arbitrary franchise? (Cheers.) Are they likely to approve of a scheme which gives to the Crown, on the advice of her British Ministers, the right to veto Irish Acts of Parliament? Are they likely to consent to a scheme which, if it preserves the Imperial supremacy at all, will certainly preserve it in a form in which it can be exercised when a Government is in power strong enough and courageous enough to exercise it? (Hear, hear.) You have stimulated the appetite of those gentlemen throughout all these six years. You told them that they are a nation (hear, hear), and that they deserve the treatment of a nation, and now you put them off with a constitution which not only does not

make them a nation, but which puts them immeasurably below the smallest self-governing colony in this great Empire. How can you expect that they, at all events, whatever they may say in view of future contingencies (laughter and cheers), are really content with the measure of Home Rule you put before them? So much for Ireland. What is Britain’s share of this balance-sheet of disaster? (Loud cheers.) We begin by paying 17 millions to these gentlemen for the privilege of wrecking our Constitution. (Cheers.) We deprive ourselves of all freedom in the management of our own taxation in the delicate matters with which taxation is concerned. We permit our deliberations to be maimed and even rendered ridiculous by Irish members who are to vote and are not to vote, who may take part in this debate and may not take part in that debate, who may turn out a Ministry and who may not vote on a Roads Bill. (Cheers and laughter.) Above all, Britain gives up the prospect which has been held out to her that, at all events, we shall have peace from these Irish controversies, and that our own time shall be given to our own affairs. Can anything be more certain than that in the Bill you are going to lay on the table of the House the Irish question, which has occupied three-fourths of our time, will occupy the whole of it? (Loud cheers.) We shall have all the endless questions which now perplex us in the management of Irish affairs; we shall be asked, and asked with an insistence which a Ministry numerically weak can hardly refuse, to alter the constitution which you tell us is final. I confess that at first sight it might seem and has been to me a matter of surprise that seven years of careful meditation has only ended in producing this strange abortion of a measure. (Laughter.) Surely those who are concerned in framing it are not deficient in either ingenuity or ability or zeal for the public good? I frankly admit it. Why, then, have they done no better than this? I will tell the House—because they have attempted an impossible task. (Loud cheers.) A Federal Government may be good. Colonial Government may be good. The British Constitution as it stands may be good. But this bastard combination of the three (loud laughter and cheers) is a ludicrous impostor (cheers), and the very attempt to force it down our throats appears to me to argue an ignorance of the past patent lessons of history which I am surprised at in gentlemen of the learning of those whom I see opposite me. (Cheers.) The Prime Minister quarrelled with me the other night because I said he was engaged in a course which reversed the process by which every great empire had been built up. Does he still differ from that statement? Spain, Italy, France, Russia, Germany, the United States of America, Great Britain itself—every nation in the world, is built up out of the ruins of smaller States (ironical laughter), which originally occupied the area on which these great empires flourished. The process of every great community has been towards further integration. The right hon. gentleman asks us to retrace our steps and make our progress towards disintegration. In so doing, I tell him, he reverses the necessary steps, the evolution by which great empires are built up and maintained. I admit that there are cases in which this process has never been completed—cases like Austria, cases like Norway and Sweden, cases like the British Empire. But all these cases of arrested growth are proof conclusive of the general proposition which I have laid down. Of course, the reason of the process is different in various cases, but the result is the same in every case, Austria-

Hungary is, for its population and its wealth, perhaps the weakest State upon the Continent. It is kept together largely, as we all know, by the menace of foreign complications. Sweden and Norway—which figured largely in the old debate, and about which the Prime Minister preserves an ominous silence now (cheers)—if any one will look at their recent history, present a conclusive proof of the difficulty in which you will eventually be involved by any attempt similar to that which the right hon. gentleman is now making. As for the British Empire, we all know that we are in process of founding beyond the seas great communities of our own race and of our own blood, and that we cannot count upon them in every stress and under every circumstance to form a part of the effective strength of the United Kingdom, and the time may possibly come—though I hope it never will come—unless we can discover some method of binding them in constitutional relations to us (cheers)—the time may come when the thread of common affection and common sentiment which now binds us together may possibly be severed. Do not let us, then, within the United Kingdom itself, endevour to carry out the process of bringing about a state of things which we see is productive of weakness in every country where it has been tried. I believe, and there is nothing—there is no faith more firmly rooted in my mind—I believe that Ireland was in process of being united to Great Britain more closely in the bonds of common national affection than ever before. (Irish ironical cheers and laughter.) The land agitation which began in 1879, under the guidance of an able politician, postponed perhaps for a generation, perhaps for more, the full consummation of our wishes. But though the harm that was then done, and the harm the right hon. gentleman has done by his proposals (hear, hear), cannot be exaggerated—though I believe our children and our grandchildren will still feel the effects of the revolution in Ireland and the betrayal in England (loud cheers)—yet I think we have it in our power in the House of Commons and the country to say that the process shall no further go, and that much as we have suffered from vacillation in the past we, at all events, will with our free consent put an end to this project, absolutely impossible of execution in its details, and even worse in its general principles (cheers), by which the right hon. gentleman, under the cloak and guise of drawing into closer harmony the different parts of the United Kingdom, is going to frame institutions which must tend, ever and ever, as time goes on, to separate us both in temper and in mind, and ultimately in nationality. (Cheers.) These are the reasons which appear to me to be conclusive against the proposals of the right hon. gentleman—reasons which I have felt all along must militate against any scheme he might propose, and even militate in greater strength against these particular proposals than against the original proposals of 1886. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. BRYCE.—Sir, the right hon. gentleman needed not to apologize to the House for the long speech and the vigorous and incisive criticism to which we have listened with admiration, and of which he is a master, so much a master, indeed, that sometimes I think he must prefer his position on the Opposition bench, where criticism can be exercised with greater freedom. But there was one feature which marred the pleasure of listening to his dialectical skill—the tone and temper of all his references to Ireland and every one concerned with Ireland. (Hear.) Before he sat down he talked of creating a common national affection between Ireland and Great Britain. It is

not by such language as he has employed, it is not by representing Ireland in the most odious light, by assuming that every power given to Ireland will be misused, or by treating the national feeling of Ireland as disloyal, that that national affection can be created. (Cheers.) I think the right hon. gentleman forgot, in the ardour of his destructive criticism, that he had actually answered in the latter part of his speech the criticisms he made in the former part, which was devoted to proving that this Bill went too far, was dangerous to every class in Ireland, and exposed Great Britain to constant menaces; whereas, the latter part of his speech went to prove that the Bill was small, and was so narrow and so miserable that it would give no satisfaction to Irish feeling, and would leave all our struggles to be renewed here. The right hon. gentleman has travelled over a large field, from history and the doctrine of constitution down to the details of finance. He has invited me to follow him into a large question, fit for the philosophic historian, no doubt, as to what are the causes of the strength and growth of States. I will not follow him on that point, because he will naturally expect from me an answer on the practical points of the Bill, to which he is certainly entitled. I will, therefore, only say I think he was unfortunate in the stress he laid upon the references he made to the cases of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Germany has become a great State by the recognition of the great principle of autonomy which this Bill is intended to carry out, and the State of Germany could not be held together for a year if the principle of the right hon. gentleman were adopted. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Then as to the case of Austria-Hungary. Was Austria-Hungary a stronger Power when she acted on the principles of the right hon. gentleman? Was Austria stronger when she held Hungary prostrate under her legions? Is she not stronger now under the loyal attachment of the Hungarians to their Constitution (cheers); and is there a more conclusive proof, in the history of our century, of the value of free institutions, and of the full and just recognition of national life than Austria-Hungary affords? With regard to the United States, again, does the right hon. gentleman not know that the States hold together throughout their vast territory, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, because they have embodied in their Constitution the very system this Bill recognizes? (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman asks whether large countries can count upon the support of their several parts in moments of stress and danger. Does he think that during these 90 years since the Union we have usually been able to count upon the loyal feeling of Ireland in moments of stress and danger? No, Sir, the last ebullition of Irish loyalty was made in their Parliament before the Union, and ever since that time it has been our duty to hold Ireland down by force. (Cheers, and cries of "No, no.") Ireland has been a source of weakness and not of strength. Do we not keep a force of police and soldiery in Ireland, one-fourth of which would be sufficient if Ireland were loyal? (Hear, hear.) We found our justification for the Bill on two facts. The first is the failure of the right hon. gentleman's coercion policy (cheers), a failure which is proved by the fact that he was obliged to abandon the lines upon which he started, and instead of reconciling Ireland by his government, whether by bludgeons or by bribes (Nationalist cheers), instead of bringing Ireland to acquiesce in the present condition of things, he was obliged to own, and must own, that the only difference between the claim of Ireland for Home Rule in 1885 and 1893 is that owing to the dissen-

sions in the Irish party that party have lost five seats. But the voice of Ireland still demands Home Rule by a majority of four-fifths of her people, and by a majority which is being reinforced in England. (Cheers.) That is my second point. We have received a commission to introduce this measure. The electors have pronounced for it by a large majority (cheers and "Oh, oh"); by a majority in the United Kingdom of 40 and daily increasing. (Cheers.) Do hon. members deny the legal and moral competence of this Parliament to legislate for Ireland as well as Great Britain? That is our justification, and we should be false not only to our pledges but unfaithful and disobedient to the voice of the country if our first act were not to lay this Bill on the table of the House. (Cheers.) I will now try to meet, as far as I can, the criticisms of the right hon. gentlemen, prefacing my answer with a few words on the general plan and scope of the Bill as we conceive it. This is a Bill which is intended to remove the friction which has existed between Great Britain and Ireland in respect to the management, or mismanagement, of Irish affairs by the British Legislature. It is intended to give to Ireland the full control of whatever can be called local or domestic affairs. Our first object, therefore, has been so to frame the Bill that everything that genuinely concerns Ireland, and Ireland alone, shall be relegated to the Irish Parliament. We have not sought to make small exceptions and restrictions from the generosity of our grant, because we believe that the object in view will be best attained if the Irish Parliament is given free scope within its proper sphere, and is not constantly checked and interfered with by petty restrictions. There are no restrictions except on two grounds. In the first place, we except those questions which touch matters of Imperial concern, and which are summed up in the third clause of the Bill, and those which touch some matter which is no doubt national to Ireland, but which is of so controversial and delicate a nature as to be apt to raise internal controversy in Ireland and to provoke measures that might savour of injustice. With these exceptions the powers in the Bill are ample and generous. (Cheers.) We have imposed safeguards in cases of necessity, not intended to interfere with the ordinary working of the Irish Government—not intended to "cabin, crib, and confine" the Home Rule we give, but to be held in reserve, to be used only in extreme cases of grave necessity which may arise if party feeling should carry the majority of the Legislature beyond its proper limits, and particularly if any attempt should be made to transgress, in letter or in spirit, the restrictions which the third and fourth clauses impose. (Hear, hear.) These are the general lines of the Bill; and in these lines I find my answer to the criticisms of the right hon. gentleman. We regard it as a safe Bill from the point of view of the Irish minority. We look to the safeguards that are provided to prevent the Irish Legislature passing beyond the bounds which this Bill prescribes in seeking to tyrannize over the minority. On the other hand, we say that, viewed from the point of view of the patriotic Irishman, who desires to see the interests of his country promoted, who complains that the English Legislature has not understood Irish needs, who comments on the failure of many English attempts, however well meant, to legislate for Ireland, the Bill gives "ample room and verge enough." We say to such Irishmen—We give you power to legislate upon all your domestic affairs, to remove the reproach that we have neglected you or legislated wrongly for

you—we give you the chance of doing better for yourselves. It is possible to combine, and this Bill will be found on close examination to combine, large control over domestic affairs with complete safeguards against any transgression of the limitations laid down. It is asked what value is to be attached to the safeguards; and the right hon. gentleman asked whether we proposed to classify the cases in which the British Cabinet is to interfere. The answer is, No; we believe that no classification would be possible. Our view is that it is a power to be kept in reserve, only to be used if the gravest case should arise, if the provisions of the Bill should be transgressed. To adopt an expression of the hon. member for North Kerry (Mr. Sexton), which I thought well fitted to convey the meaning of the Bill, it is not to be used capriciously or vexatiously.

Mr. BALFOUR.—Who is to be the judge of whether it shall be exercised?

Mr. BRYCE.—The regular advisers of the Crown—that is to say, the British Cabinet. That is my answer also to the remarks made about the difficulty the Crown would be placed in from having two sets of advisers. The Crown will be advised as the Crown is always, everywhere, and in all affairs, by the British Cabinet. It is the Imperial Cabinet in the constitution of which the Irish will have and ought to have a voice. The Irish members will deal with the Lord Lieutenant who, upon their advice, will give or withhold the assent of the Crown to Irish Bills. If there should arise a case such as I confess we are bound to contemplate—but which as I believe will not arise, and will not arise because we have a safeguard in reserve, and the very existence of that safeguard is the best assurance that it will not arise—if an extreme case should arise and the provisions of this Bill should be transgressed, if any act of tyrannous character should be attempted by the Irish Parliament, it will be the duty of the British Cabinet to intervene. With regard to the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, it is fully expressed in the Bill, but it did not need to be expressed at all, because every lawyer and every one familiar with the working of Parliament will know that we could not if we would impair the supremacy of Parliament. It is the very foundation of our whole Constitutional life. If it is any satisfaction to hon. gentlemen to know it, we do not rely merely upon the preamble for the assertion of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. You will find in the Bill a clearly-drawn clause in which the functions of the Imperial Parliament with regard to Irish legislation are set forth.

CAPTAIN BETHELL.—Will the Governor of Ireland be allowed to withhold assent in the same way as the Governor-General of Canada?

Mr. BRYCE.—If the House wishes me to go into the colonial case I am quite willing to do so, but I had perhaps better proceed to deal with the safeguards in order. The right hon. gentleman asks who can predict what would be the results of the exercise of the veto. There are many things no man can predict. What statesmen have to do is to devise the best machinery they can which may be adapted to the cases likely to arise. We have devised a machinery which we believe will not be needed, but which will be perfectly effective if it is needed. Our view of the case is this—that in the ordinary working of the Irish Parliament it will be no more necessary to interpose the veto than it is necessary to interpose the veto in the working of the colonial Legislatures; but if an extreme case arises it will be dealt with on its merits. We believe that,

just as there has grown up in the case of the colonies a body of tradition and usage, which is recognized by colonial Governors and by Colonial Secretaries at home, as to cases in which the reserved powers of the Crown can be properly employed, so there will grow up in Ireland also a body of usage and tradition which will be soon recognized and will obtain no inconsiderable force and which will dictate the general lines on which the reserved powers of the Crown are to be employed. No doubt the usage in the case of Ireland will be somewhat different from the usage in the case of the distant colonies, but the general principle will be the same. It is impossible to provide beforehand for every case that may arise ; what we have to do is to provide machinery that shall be flexible and adaptable, and to deal with a case when it arises. The same remark applies to the reference of Constitutional questions by the Crown to the Privy Council. That right is in the first place given to the Lord Lieutenant and the Secretary of State.

Mr. J. REDMOND.—Which Secretary of State ? Are we to be under the Colonial Office ?

Mr. BRYCE.—The Secretary of State who has to deal with Ireland usually is the Home Secretary ; but there is no idea of subjecting Ireland to the Home Secretary. I am endeavouring to explain the power of the Lord Lieutenant or the Home Secretary to refer to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council a question arising upon the constitutionality of an Act of the Irish Parliament—that is, upon the conformity or nonconformity of the Irish Act to the provisions of this Bill. If it were alleged that an Irish Act transferred the provisions of this Bill, which may be called the constitutional basis of the Irish Legislature, it would be proper to have a speedy determination of the question, and it would be the duty of the Lord Lieutenant or of the Home Secretary to obtain such decision. It will also be in the power of any person who alleges that any unconstitutional act has been done to dispute it by ordinary proceedings at law. We know the way in which these things are done in the United States. If the Irish Legislature should pass an Act which is inconsistent with the provisions of this Bill, that Act will be *ipso facto* invalid ; it will be invalid in so far as it conflicts with the provisions of this Bill ; it will therefore not be law ; and it will be in the power of any one to refuse to obey it. There is therefore ample safeguard against the transgression of the provisions of this Bill. The only reason why power was given to the Lord Lieutenant or the Home Secretary to refer the question to the Judicial Committee is that a more speedy determination may be obtained than would be obtained in regular course of law. As to safeguards for Ulster, it has been remarked that what the Prime Minister said in 1886 has not now been repeated. But let us recall the reception given to these words of the Prime Minister. They were answered by words of defiance from hon. gentlemen who claim to represent Ulster here—a point upon which I confess I have great doubt. (Hear, hear.) I feel sometimes inclined to ask hon. members not to judge the people of Ulster by the blustering and noisy vehemence of those who profess to speak on their behalf. (Hear, hear.) At any rate, these gentlemen would not have our plan at all ; they did not want any security or safeguards. They also said, "We do not want to be separated from the rest of Ireland." I give them all credit for that answer ; I think in that they are right. There is no severance of the interest of Ulster from that of the rest of Ireland. If there be any danger to Protestants, surely the people of Ulster are better able to take

care of themselves than the Protestants scattered in the rest of Ireland. Yet within the last ten years, whatever Government has been in power, we have not heard of a single instance of oppression perpetrated upon Protestants in the South of Ireland. ("Oh !") The interests of Ulster are the interests of Ireland in another sense. I may refer gentlemen who are nervous on the subject of Ulster to the provisions they will find in the third and fourth clauses of the Bill not only to protect religion and to prohibit any establishment of religion or any favouring of one denomination, but also to safeguard all educational interests and also to protect life, liberty, and property in terms which we have drawn from one of the amendments to the American Constitution. I prefer to rely upon this safeguard. We are told that the difficulty the Irish Parliament will experience in starting is the want of a larger balance-sheet. Ulster, we know, contains a large amount of the wealth and manufacturing industries of the country. In order to increase the revenue of the country it will be generally admitted that every industry ought to be fostered and encouraged in Ireland, and I cannot believe that Irishmen, even if they were such perverse creatures as hon. members opposite appear to believe, would seek to destroy the industries which are the sources of prosperity. (Hear, hear.) As to the opinion of Ulster I do not believe that Ulster is by any means as unanimous as is sometimes represented. The tenant-farmers of Ulster, the bone and sinew of the people, are far more concerned about the question of the reduction of rents, and far more anxious to obtain rent reductions, than they are to resist Home Rule. (Nationalist cheers.) I now come to the subject of the Legislative Council. That will be an assembly which I believe is fairly certain to represent the property interests of the country. We are constantly told that not only all the intelligence, but all the property, of Ireland is opposed to the Nationalist party, and we are told sometimes that the anti-Home-Rule party consists of two-fifths of the population, sometimes that it consists of one-third, and sometimes that it contains two millions of the population out of four and a-half millions. If, as is represented, they form a very large proportion of the people of Ireland, and if they represent all the property and intelligence, surely they will be able to command a sufficiency of representation on the Legislative Council, which is to consist of 48 persons elected by a limited constituency of 170,000. This body is constituted on purpose to give a due representation to property. The right hon. gentleman says that it will be swept away. Well, there are no communities in our colonies which are more democratic than the rising, enlightened communities of Australasia, and in Victoria and South Australia there exists an Upper House elected on the basis of a property qualification, and that Upper House is not only not unpopular, but is admitted on all sides to have rendered great service to the colony and to exercise a very valuable and moderating influence. Therefore we base ourselves upon the experience of communities fully as democratic, and in some respects more democratic, than we expect Ireland to be. I do not see why it should be thought that the Irish Legislative Council should not be an extremely useful part of the constitutional machinery. (Hear, hear.) To me the plan appears to me far better than the two orders proposed in 1886, because the existence of a separate House will involve separate debates, which may do much to enlighten and instruct the people, and there will be additional consideration given to Bills,

because they will have to pass through their stages in both Houses. The right hon. gentleman opposite assumed that the council might be extinguished, but when the Bill is printed he will see that the Irish Legislature will have no power to extinguish the Legislative Council. The right hon. gentleman also referred to the position of the Royal Irish Constabulary, the Civil Service, and the Judges. I can give him satisfactory assurances on all these heads. The constabulary deserve the praise which has been bestowed upon them. We are aware of the obligations which Imperial legislation has imposed upon us in their regard, and we propose to abide by those obligations, and it will be found that the constabulary have been dealt with in accordance with the chartered position which they hold, and that they will have no reason to complain. The same remarks apply to the Civil Service and the Judges. We recognize our liability to make provision for them, and we have satisfied that liability. With regard to the Judges the right hon. gentleman is quite in error in supposing that there will be any power in the Irish Legislature to diminish the salary or the pension of a Judge appointed in the future. We expressly safeguard the rights of future Judges to the salaries and pensions which they understand they are to have when they are appointed. I was a little surprised by the zeal which the right hon. gentleman showed for the maintenance of judicial independence (Nationalist cheers), bearing in mind what has occurred in connexion with the magistracy.

Mr. BALFOUR.—I inherited the system from the right hon. gentlemen who sit opposite.

Mr. BRYCE.—I am aware that the right hon. gentleman inherited what had been in existence before he came into office, but the policy of the right hon. gentleman with respect to his removable magistrates and the way in which he used them as instruments (Nationalist cheers) for his policy of coercion imposed a stain upon the judicial system of the country and the independence of the Bench to which they had not been exposed before.

Mr. BALFOUR.—The right hon. gentleman has accused me of tampering with justice in Ireland. (Nationalist cheers, and cries of "So you did.") Such an accusation ought to be justified by facts. (Cheers.)

Mr. BRYCE.—Nothing was further from my mind than to suggest that the right hon. gentleman had tampered with the independence of justice. I know him to be incapable of it, and I believe that no Minister of the Crown would do such a thing. My meaning was that the Coercion Act as administered under the right hon. gentleman necessarily and inevitably imposed a very difficult duty on the Irish magistrates. I now come to a point in which the right hon. gentleman laid very considerable stress and on which, I admit, he is entitled to lay stress. The point has reference to the position of the Irish members in the British Parliament. It would, no doubt, be difficult to find a perfectly satisfactory system. The course of exclusion is obviously inadmissible because it was rejected in 1886 by a very large majority of the English people. To the course of retention for all purposes I have myself never been able to see great objections, but it appears to excite very strong objections—objections so strong that it would perhaps be difficult to persuade any majority to adopt it. The course of retention in lessened numbers is open to a double logical objection, and therefore we fall back upon the course of retention for Imperial purposes only. I do not deny that, for those who are

familiar with daily work in this House, a system under which some members will vote in some divisions and not in others does present elements of difficulty. (Hear, hear.) I think, however, those difficulties appear to be very much greater at first sight than they will be seen to be when examined in detail. When the clause is produced I hope it will be found that it provides for the cases that would arise, and we have added to that clause a proviso that the decision on the application of a Bill to cases in which it will arise shall never be questioned otherwise than in this House. This question, in other words, will never come before the Courts of law, and no suspicion of invalidity about the carrying of a Bill or resolution will arise; it is a matter which will remain within the jurisdiction of the House itself. The right hon. gentleman asked whether it was right that Irish members should determine what Cabinet was to be in power, and he justly observed that a most important function of Parliament is to keep an Executive in power. That function must belong to the whole Imperial Parliament, because the Imperial Cabinet is charged with the management of the concerns of the whole Empire, and clearly it can only be kept in power by all the members from all parts of the United Kingdom, who are all equally interested in the due conduct of Imperial affairs. The only inconvenience, therefore, which will arise in this—and I frankly admit it is an inconvenience—that it will be possible that a Ministry may be in power, supported by the vote of all the members, who will not be able to pass Bills for England alone, because they do not possess an English majority. (Ironical cheers.) Will the House be surprised to hear that although it has sometimes rarely happened since the Reform Act that there have been Ministries in power dependent on an Irish majority only, there has never yet been, so far as I can gather—and I am indebted on this point to my right hon. friend the First Commissioner of Works, who has made a careful examination of it (ironical cheers)—any case of an English Bill of first-class importance, or even considerable importance, which has been carried except by the votes of an English majority. Therefore the case which we are contemplating is not only a hypothetical case, but is one which, according to the experience of the past, is most unlikely to occur. I will go further and say it is a case which ought not to occur. The hon. and learned member for Plymouth put the case of the Welsh Suspensory Bill. So long as the Irish majority remain here, of course, they must retain their right of voting, and it would be most unjust to them, before you have given them a Legislature of their own, to debar them from voting upon any Bill whatever. If the hon. and learned member is ready to assume the Home Rule Bill already passed, then the question of their moral right to vote for a Suspensory Bill may become a practical question. (An hon. member.—Legal right.) The hon. and learned member put a very bad case, because what is our contention? It is that such a Bill ought not to be decided by the votes of English members, but by the votes of Welsh members—that is to say, it is a Bill which the English majority ought to adopt when there is a large and overwhelming majority of Welsh members in its favour. But I will put the case of an English Bill. Suppose the case of the disestablishment of the Church of England. I frankly own it would be impossible to carry such a Bill against an English majority, but it would be impossible now. We are dealing here with idle and fanciful dangers, and the very difficulties which the hon. and learned

gentleman conjures up are in existence at this moment. Scotch members have always claimed that it was most unfair to force a Scotch Bill upon this House against the wish of a large majority of Scotch members, and the House has always adopted that view. I admit that upon many small points, amendments in Committee, Scotch opinion may have been overborne, but there has never been a case of a large Bill being forced upon Scotland against the wish of a Scotch majority. When hon. members speak of inconveniences, let them remember the numerous inconveniences from which we may now suffer if majorities were to assert all their legal rights and override the moral and practical aspects of the case. (Hear, hear.) For my part, I believe that if the House chooses between the two plans, it will be found that the plan we have proposed is subject to fewer inconveniences, and is far more likely before long to be smooth, easy, and familiar in its working. The hon. and learned member took the case of a sudden vote. That is just one of the cases, now, which might occur if we did not deal with it upon common-sense methods. Snap divisions are not allowed now to upset a Ministry, and they ought not to be allowed to have any more effect in the future than we allow them now. Upon the subject of finance, there is a clause in the Bill which expressly deals with the case of the collection of income-tax, and which, I think, removes the inconveniences to which the right hon. gentleman very properly called attention. The right hon. gentleman asks, What would happen if the Customs were to be abolished? He forgets that that is an Imperial matter, and there will be no difficulty in dealing with such a case, because the Irish members will be here, and because in all matters of Imperial finance they will be equally interested with ourselves. We are not, as the right hon. gentleman has said, dissolving partnership with Ireland; we are retaining them for all our most important affairs, for the whole of our Imperial Budget, Imperial expenditure, and Imperial enterprises, and in any proposal for a deep-cutting change the Irish members would have to bear their part. That there will be some difficulty, that Budgets will occasionally present problems of more complexity than they have presented hitherto, will be admitted, but we have introduced a scheme in the Bill by which, as we trust, it will be found possible for the House to deal equitably with the claims of Ireland and with the adjustment of taxation between the two countries. The principle is simple, and we have full confidence in the wisdom and equity of Parliament to give effect to the principle as the case actually arises. I feel the great value of the criticisms which the right hon. gentleman brought forward, and it is far better that such criticisms should be given at the very outset. I must, however, say that it is easy to conjure up difficulties with all new schemes. Why, if any philosophic visitor were to come down here from some other planet and ask some one to explain the British Constitution to him, would he not say, "It bristles with difficulties"? (Laughter and cheers.) May I call the attention of the House to a very interesting parallel case which happened just a little more than 100 years ago? In 1788 the United States of America were called upon to consider a Constitution which had been drafted. That Constitution had a very narrow escape of being rejected. Predictions the most various in their character and most searching in their quality were levelled against it, and it was confidently declared that it never would work, but would lead

either to the destruction of liberty or to speedy disunion and separation. More than 100 years have passed since then, and to-day, under that Constitution, 70 millions of people live in happiness, having reached a pitch of prosperity hitherto unexampled in the history of the world (cheers), while to-day reverence is paid to the authors of it. If we are to assume that everybody will do the wrong thing, that everybody will start, not to try to make the scheme work, but to make it fail, difficulties may arise. We, making all allowance for human frailty, nevertheless believe that this scheme will succeed, and we believe it because we believe that there are good forces as well as bad in human nature, and that on the whole the good forces are the stronger. There will be a strong interest in making it work. In spite of the warnings of the right hon. gentleman we believe that even a Tory Government will try to work this Constitution fairly, and not to reopen strife. When a Tory Government comes into power, as in the turning of the wheel it is certain to do, the right hon. gentleman himself will not be the man to make a capricious use either of the veto or of the supremacy of Parliament, but he will recognize the relief given to Britain by the change. (Hear, hear.) In view of that relief, of the strength which harmony will give to this country, and of all the good results which we trust this Bill will work, I venture to hope that even now it is not too late to make an appeal to the patriotism of hon. and right hon. gentlemen opposite to try to make the scheme perfect. If they must challenge principles, let them challenge them where they fall, but let them forego harassing and vexatious opposition upon every detail with a view to prevent the Bill from becoming law. They know as well as we do that some scheme for Irish self-government must pass, that the demand which has been made ever since 1800 will some day be granted. (Hear, hear.) Is it not better for them even now not to protract a useless struggle which may involve other institutions ("oh," and cheers), but yield with some measure of grace to what they must see to be inevitable. (Cheers.) Be that as it may, we have sought to do our duty to Britain and to Ireland. We lay this Bill upon the table of the House and we trust to the Liberal party and to both sections of the Irish party, because when they come to examine the Bill they will find in it a full satisfaction for all their reasonable claims, to help us to carry it through. We have sought to present a fair, moderate, practical, and equitable scheme (hear, hear), and we trust that it has in itself the elements of success and of stability, because it appeals, not to fear, or force, or to the coercive policy of the past, but to the higher and better side of human nature, because it is calculated to bring peace and concord out of strife and bitterness, because it rests upon the solid and enduring foundation of those principles of self-government, freedom, and responsibility—responsibility the offspring of the self-government—by which Britain herself has grown great and has become the model and pattern of ordered freedom to all the free nations of the world. (Cheers.)

SIR J. LUBBOCK said that they had all listened with respect and admiration to the speech of his right hon. friend the Prime Minister in introducing this Bill. He laid its provisions before the House in a conciliatory manner, and he hoped that they would all debate it with as little heat as possible, for in doing so lay their best hope of arriving at a wise conclusion. It was a momentous measure and introduced fundamental changes into our Constitution. It was described as a

Bill for the better government of Ireland. That might or might not be, but, though it would alter fundamentally the English Constitution, he thought no one could say that it would conduce to the better government of England. His right hon. friend regarded some such measure as a necessity. His right hon. friend said that the alternative was between Home Rule and coercion—he spoke of their "embracing the path" of coercion, which was rather a curious metaphor—and in support of that contention he referred to the present Crimes Act. But Lord Selborne, one of our greatest constitutional lawyers—his own Lord Chancellor in two Ministries—had told them that that Act made no new crime. He believed that statement to be absolutely correct. However that may be, while the Act abolished the true coercion in Ireland—boycotting—for some time past there had only been two or three persons in prison under it in the whole of Ireland, and he believed they were in prison for offences which would have been so in any civilized country in the world. His right hon. friend justified his Bill on the ground that the population of Ireland was irreconcilable. But was the case so hopeless? The right hon. gentleman himself told the House that Belfast, now so strongly attached to the Union, was at first bitterly opposed to it. He heard that portion of his right hon. friend's speech with deep regret. He told the House how unanimously the people of Belfast then opposed the Union which they now supported, and that "we have seen them alter from what we think better to what we think worse"; and he expressed a hope that they would change again, resume their old feelings of jealousy towards us, and "form one in a noble and glorious unity with the rest of their fellow-countrymen." They did form new a noble and glorious unity with the rest of their fellow-countrymen. We were their fellow-countrymen, and we meant to remain so. (Cheers.) He admitted that as regarded rural Ireland the case was different. But it was not hopeless. The people of Belfast were in favour of the Union because they had prospered under it, because they felt it was to their advantage to form an integral part of this great Empire. The rural population—and he deeply regretted it—had been less fortunate, though not through any fault of ours. What had been the economical history of rural Ireland since 1800? The population at that time was about 5,000,000. Fostered especially by the great development of the cultivation of the potato, it rose to over 8,000,000 by about 1845. Then came the potato disease, and the yield of the potato, which had been between six and seven tons to the acre, fell below 3½ tons. This caused the great famine, and we contributed £8,000,000 to mitigate its effects. But the result was that something like one-half of the staple food of the rural population was swept away at one fell blow. Necessarily the population dwindled. It was now again below 5,000,000, and at the present figure would, he hoped, be maintained in comparative comfort. But the fall in population from 8,000,000 to 5,000,000 was unavoidably accompanied by great suffering. He did not complain that we were blamed, though he thought unjustly; but he hoped that, now this great source of suffering and sorrow was at an end, there were brighter prospects in store for the rural population, and that, though it must take time, the same happy change of feeling which had taken place in Ulster would extend to other parts of Ireland also. Since he had had a seat in that House he had always listened with respect and sympathy to the views of Irish members, and he had voted, and should vote, for every

measure calculated to remove any injustice or to promote the comfort and welfare of our Irish fellow-countrymen. (Hear, hear.) The experiment which we were asked to try was absolutely novel. There was nothing like it in the world. Austria-Hungary (and nearly the same might be said of Norway and Sweden) was a dual empire. Each of the parts had equal privileges. It was presided over by an Emperor with great power, and yet he was not sure that it possessed the elements of strength or of stability. So also in the United States and in Switzerland every State had similar rights. That was not what was proposed now. He saw that several Gladstonians had declared in favour of "Home Rule all round." But that was not Home Rule; it was Federalism. It would present great difficulties, but it would not be open to the objections which were felt to Home Rule. Federalism treated all parts of the empire alike; Home Rule granted special privileges to one portion which were denied to the rest. His right hon. friend had not correctly appreciated the position which the Unionists took up as regarded the retention of Irish members. They did not advocate their retention with a view of maintaining the supremacy of the Crown. The argument was that you are on the horns of a dilemma; if you do not keep the Irish members you cannot be said to maintain the Union, and if you do, to use the words of the Secretary for Scotland, you make them not only masters in Dublin, but our masters in Westminster also. The Prime Minister said that he proposed in this Bill to give the Irish their proportionate weight. It seemed to him that 80 was too large number. The true measure was, not the number of the population, but the amount of the contribution, and according to the contribution, although the financial part of the proposal was not very clear, 40 would be a fairer number than 80. Ireland would in future only contribute one-twentieth of our Imperial expenditure, and yet it was proposed to give them one-seventh of the representation! The Bill of 1886 excluded the Irish members, and in criticizing that Bill Unionists dwelt on the consequences which must have followed from that proposal. They succeeded in convincing the country that their objections were well founded, and they converted the great bulk of the Liberal party, who ought not, therefore, to complain of the course taken at that time. In the Bill now before the House the Government had placed themselves on the second horn of the dilemma, which seemed to him to be the more dangerous one. Who was to decide when Irish members were and when they were not to vote? Was that difficult and invidious-duty to be thrown on the Speaker? Surely on that point we should be opening the door to interminable disputes. (Hear, hear.) Moreover, the English Government was an executive as well as a legislative body. They carried on the government of the country. But while we should have no influence in the selection of the Irish Government, Irish members would have a very powerful voice in the selection of our Government. (Hear, hear.) Suppose a case—and history had shown it to be a very common one—such a case as the present; when the Government had been put in power and was kept in power by Irish votes against the wishes of the people of Great Britain. Under this Bill who would be Prime Minister? As regarded our home affairs, Lord Salisbury would have a majority of 40; as regarded Imperial affairs the right hon. gentleman would have a majority of 20. We might well ask the memorable question, "How is her Majesty's Government to be carried on?" The Budget would be an

Imperial question, but Irish members would vote on it, and they would thus be our masters. We welcomed them here as equals, but the right hon. gentleman would put them in a position of advantage over us. The right hon. gentleman had said that no Bill of first-rate importance had ever been passed in this House against the wishes of England. Well, this was a Bill of first-rate importance, and he hoped it would not be passed against the wishes of England. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman had told the House that it was a cardinal feature of his proposals to maintain the supremacy of Parliament. But how was that to be insured? Not through the police, for they would gradually pass to the local authorities. Not through the Executive Government, for they would be under the Irish Parliament. Through the troops? That would be most unsatisfactory. But who was to call them out? Sir J. Stephen pointed out this difficulty in a letter to *The Times* on May 1, 1886, when he said:—

“How would the troops be set in motion? No military officer would act on his own responsibility. The Irish magistrates, answerable to the Irish legislative body, would not call upon the troops to act against the orders of that body, though they might be compelled to act in obedience to it.”

Under this Bill the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament in Ireland would be a mockery and a sham. (Cheers.) Again, we might be placed in a position of great difficulty if the Irish Executive infringed the neutrality laws to aid in any cause with which they sympathized. What power should we have of enforcing those laws? There might, for instance, be enlistments on behalf of one side or the other in some foreign struggle. That would place us in a great international difficulty, and yet how could we prevent it? The right hon. gentleman had postponed to the close of his speech one very important part of the question—that of finance—and he had left the House in much doubt as to the provisions of the Bill. Whatever difficulty there might be as to the determination of the questions on which Irish members were not to vote, there was no doubt that they were to vote on questions of peace and war. But if they involved England in a war, how could we be assured that they would bear their fair proportion of the burden? (Hear, hear.) The Prime Minister had referred to Customs, but it could not be possible to raise more than a small portion of the funds by Customs duties. The duties on spirits could not be raised without changing the Excise, which was to be an Irish fund. The right hon. gentleman had scarcely alluded to the income-tax, and no one seemed to understand his proposals as to that great source of revenue, but he had said, mysteriously, that, “as to other sources of revenue, we have in view a proposal by which we should make sure of getting a fair provision from Ireland for special Imperial necessities.” Considering the great importance of this question, and the disadvantage at which we should be placed if we had 80 Irish members voting here, while we had no voice at Dublin, it was remarkable that the right hon. gentleman should have thought it unnecessary to give even a hint of the proposals he intended to make. (Hear, hear.) He doubted very much whether this was a Bill for the better government of Ireland. It certainly was not one which would conduce to the better government of England. He believed that it would have an unfortunate effect on Ireland; that it would lead to bitter hostility, if not to civil war. (Hear, hear.) Ireland needed capital for the improvement of her harbours, for the drainage of her

land, for the development of her industries, but the very shadow of Home Rule had depressed Irish industries and Irish credit. Mr. Parnell had himself admitted this, for in the debate on the Bill of 1886 he said:—

“Irish landlords now can borrow money at a low rate of interest . . . for the improvement of their estates; Irish tenants can borrow money for improving their farms; local bodies can borrow money for sanitary purposes within their jurisdiction. All these are very important matters. But we shall have to surrender all these under the scheme of the right hon. gentleman.”

And what was true then would be equally true now. (Hear, hear.) For Ireland, then, he believed, this was an ill-omened Bill. As far as England was concerned, this Bill would place us at a terrible disadvantage. The words of the right hon. gentleman the Secretary for Scotland were as true now as when they were spoken. He said:—

“It is proposed to give Ireland a Parliament of its own for Irish legislation, but to admit Irish representatives to the Imperial Parliament to discuss and vote on Imperial matters. . . . However anxious we may be to divide the domestic functions of Parliament from its Imperial functions, I will venture to say that Irish members will not only be absolute masters of their own Parliament in Dublin, but they will be our masters at Westminster as well.”

This was not only an Irish but an English question, in which Englishmen had a vital interest, for it fundamentally altered the government of England as well as that of Ireland. He was glad that this country decided against the Bill in 1886 and in 1892, and he was sure that it would give the same response to any future appeal. (Hear, hear.) He should be the first to admire the spirit of conciliation in which the Bill was brought forward by the Prime Minister. He desired to promote good feeling in Ireland, and to receive any proposals which would tend to her well-being. But he could not support a Bill which he believed to be fraught with danger to both countries; which opened up new subjects of contention; which would throw the British Government into confusion; which abandoned those just rights of self-government which Parliament had no right to sacrifice; and which gave to the Irish representatives a control over English affairs to which no wise and patriotic Englishman would consent. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. THORNTON, who addressed the House for the first time, expressed his emphatic belief that the constituencies in London at the general election gave but a qualified verdict in favour of Home Rule. The subject was almost entirely ignored; and the supporters of the Government in London fought on the cry of the siege of the metropolis. Home Rule was lost beneath the ample folds of the London programme. He, however, could claim the authority of his constituents for opposing the Bill, because, like other Unionists, he took every occasion to place the question of the Union before them. He contended that there could be no complete mandate from any constituency unless the facts were placed before both parties. His hon. colleague in the representation of Clapham and Battersea (Mr. John Burns) was present. He was a faithful friend of the poorer classes; but he would agree that his position in Battersea was due to the interest he took in the needs of the masses and in social questions, and that Home Rule was not a prominent plank in his programme. (Hear, hear.) He maintained that if there had not been a policy of concealment on the part of the Government, they had at any rate allowed other sub-

jects to be put before Home Rule until the last moment. What he had gathered from this debate was that Ireland would gain by this measure either a practical independence or the position of a province in shackles. Did the House want Ireland to return either to practical independence or to the terrible condition of neglect of which the Prime Minister spoke in his speech? It was his own belief that this measure would never be tried. He believed that the time would come when the Irish representatives would come and ask England to remain united to Ireland. They would come and ask English Ministers to perpetuate the policy of Mr. Pitt, the policy of allowing the Irish people to remain on a level with ourselves—a policy which, he believed, to be one of justice and mercy. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CROMBIE said he had listened to the most able speech of the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition with the keenest pleasure, but the right hon. gentleman's mastery of political argument had not blinded him to the weakness of his case. When the right hon. gentleman recommended the German Empire to the consideration of the House as one which was in consonance with the spirit of the times, he could not help feeling that evil communications had corrupted good manners, and that the right hon. gentleman had been putting his money on Parnellism, and, being confronted by the member for Waterford, had determined to go one better. The right hon. gentleman had endeavoured to show that the Prime Minister was on the horns of a dilemma. He said the Prime Minister had argued in 1886 that Ireland required Home Rule because she was disaffected, and that now he argued that Home Rule was necessary because Ireland was tranquil. It appeared to him that if the Prime Minister was impaled upon one horn, the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition was impaled upon the other, for in 1886 he opposed Home Rule because Ireland was disaffected and now he opposed it because she was tranquil. The right hon. gentleman told the House that Ulster objected to Home Rule and was entitled to separate treatment. That seemed to be initiating a new doctrine in legislation. Why did not the right hon. gentleman follow the same principle when he introduced a Coercion Bill? As the right hon. gentleman said, Ireland was divided into two parts, and his Coercion Bill was objected to by the greater part of Ireland, though it was not objected to by Ulster. He referred to the Home Rule Bill of 1886 and read a resolution submitted to the Birmingham Two Thousand, at which the right hon. member for West Birmingham and the right hon. member for Bordesley were present, urging, among other things, the retention of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament. Now that the Prime Minister was willing to retain the Irish members he called upon those right hon. gentlemen to declare whether they would now support the present measure. It seemed to him that it was a policy of negation which bound the Opposition together—a denial of the Prime Minister and all his works. He had not been able to detect in any speech from that side of the House the slightest shadow of an alternative measure. Though the right hon. member for West Birmingham had put forward certain modifications of the previous Home Rule Bill, none of his present colleagues had considered them. The only persons who had consented to hear the details were some of the members of the present Administration at the Round Table Conference. It was true that the leader of the Opposition had presented a measure granting local self-government to Ireland, and though

the right hon. gentleman and he were both Scotsmen, no surgical operation was needed to show that this measure of the right hon. gentleman's was a joke of the hugest proportions. (Laughter.) Such a Bill might be good business in the libretto of a comic opera, but it could not be viewed as a measure calculated to allay the feeling of ancient strife between this country and Ireland. (Hear, hear.) The Opposition admitted that the case of Ireland was one of extreme political necessity, yet they offered no scheme as a remedy for the evils which were apparent to every one. (Hear, hear.) All they could do was to oppose the scheme of the one statesman who had a plan to offer, and who was bold enough to undertake the duty of formulating a remedy. (Hear, hear.) The Opposition in 1886 wrecked the Home Rule Bill introduced in that year upon its details, which, he admitted, were its weakness; but the details of the present measure constituted its strength. (Hear, hear.) His members around him had long looked forward to the opportunity of voting for such a measure as the present Bill as a practical means of healing the sore which had rankled between England and Ireland for seven centuries and of bringing to Ireland a period of prosperity and peace. (Hear, hear.)

COLONEL BRIDGEMAN said there were two points to which he wished to draw attention and on which he desired information from the Government. The first had reference to the retention or exclusion of the Irish members. The right hon. gentleman the member for Aberdeen had stated that the objections to the retention of the Irish members were fanciful, and that the Bill would provide for any difficulty that might arise in connexion with it. But he would suggest a difficulty that he thought could hardly have been foreseen. Let them suppose that a Conservative Government was in power, that the Home Rule Bill had become law, and 80 Irish members were sitting in the House. If, in such circumstances, the right hon. member for Mid Lothian brought forward a motion to disestablish the Scotch Church the Irish members would not take part in the division because it would be a purely British question; but supposing thereupon a motion of want of confidence brought on, the Irish members would vote, and the result would be that the Conservative Government would have to resign. Then the right hon. gentleman the member for Mid Lothian would again bring a Bill for disestablishment of the Scotch Church; the Irish members could not vote, and the Government would be beaten and the right hon. gentleman would have to resign. Then the same thing might go on over and over again, and the House would be placed in a ridiculous position before the world. He should like to know how the Government would meet such a difficulty as that. The second point had reference to the financial question. They had been told that the Irish contribution to the English Exchequer was to be between 4 and 5 per cent., which, considering that the population of Ireland was 12 per cent., appeared to him to be a very small proportion. If, say, 4½ per cent. was the proper rate of contribution, why should the Irish people send representatives to Parliament in the proportion of 12 per cent.? If the Bill went into Committee he should move that the number of Irish representatives should correspond with the rate of contribution to the English Exchequer, and as this was a case of taxation and representation going together he should watch with some interest how Radical members voted upon it. He believed that if the Government had endeavoured to follow the firm and generous Irish policy of the leader of the

Opposition there would have been no necessity for this Bill and that Ireland would very soon have taken her proper place in line with this country, adding to its strength rather than taking from it by the measure before the House. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. COLLINGS said the hon. member for Kincardineshire had reminded the House that in 1886 Birmingham gave some advice to the then Liberal party, which they refused to take, and for tendering which those who offered it were ruled out of the Liberal party. The hon. member said, however, that the party had now accepted it. But they had accepted it seven years too late. (Hear, hear.) It was remarkable that the efforts made at that time to prevent the Prime Minister from making ducks and drakes of the Liberal party, which was put into his hands for totally different purposes from those for which he used it, should be brought as a reproach against them now. What could he say of those gentlemen who, like the hon. member, followed like dumb dogs the present Prime Minister, who, without a mandate from the country or consultation with his supporters, wrecked the party which it had taken generations to build up? The right hon. gentleman might have given his personal consent to Home Rule, but he had no right under the circumstances to ruin the Liberal party upon it. (Hear, hear.) They now knew why the Bill had been concealed for seven years. The reason was that it was pretty well guessed that the British people would stand nothing of the kind. Since 1886, the Prime Minister said, the majority in Great Britain against Home Rule had decreased. The verdict was not given on Home Rule. Let the Government go to the country and ask its opinion on this Bill. (Laughter.) What was put before the country was water and gas. (Mr. Roby.—Never.) Well, here was one card; he had seen scores of them. It was printed at Leicester—"Home Rule for Ireland; Home Rule for England by means of parish councils." (Laughter.) The policy of concealment had been kept up to the last, but they now saw that the Bill was a Repeal Bill. (Hear, hear.) He was struck with the reception given to the Bill. There was great admiration of the mental and physical powers of the Prime Minister. There was a recognition of the glamour of his great personality, but as to the Bill itself there was scarcely a cheer. ("Oh," and laughter.) He meant the Bill apart from the introducer. The policy before the country was a policy of the disintegration of the United Kingdom. The Chancellor of the Duchy said that the Government had a commission from the United Kingdom on this Bill. (Hear, hear.) The country had never seen the Bill. (Cheers.) Even hon. members had never known what the Bill was until yesterday. Why should they not go to their constituents with the Bill in their hands? Would any one believe that Home Rule meant two separate Executives ("Yes"), that in these small islands there were to be two Parliaments, two Prime Ministers, two Chancellors of the Exchequer, two fountains of justice, two standards of law and order? (Irish laughter.) Surely, Great Britain was a party to the Union, and she was against its repeal. It was said the Union was brought about by bribes. (Hear, hear.) If this Bill were carried, then disunion would be brought about by lures, promises, and bribes (uproar, and cries of "Order"), which would be far more potent than the bribes of 1800. It was now conceded that 80 was the proper number of members which Ireland ought to have, and there were constituencies in England, particularly in Lancashire, which were

controlled by the Irish vote. The country ought not to be tricked into this Bill by a majority got together by these means. It was the duty of the Opposition to insist that this Bill should be considered by the constituencies before it became law. Why was there to be a Repeal Bill at all? A Parliament which was good enough for England and Scotland ought, in his opinion, to be good enough for Ireland. Why was there to be a separate Parliament for Ireland? What liberty was there in England that was not found in Ireland? What liberty was there in the North of Ireland that was not also found in the South? Until he heard the speech of the Chancellor of the Duchy, he hardly realized how many difficulties stood in the way of the Bill. (Laughter.) The right hon. gentleman, in an academic and intellectual manner, had shown that the measure was a perfect maze of intricacies and complications. Only a few months before the right hon. gentleman's conversion to the policy of Home Rule he had said:—

"Rhetorical commonplaces about liberty and nationality have little application to the Ireland of to-day. The Irish ideal of a leader has been an orator who will worry and vex and terrify the ruling Power, not a constructive statesman whose plans will restore prosperity to the country."

The right hon. gentleman also said:—"At the lowest computation more than 1,000,000 Irishmen are opposed to the Nationalist programme, and this million includes nearly all the property and education of Ireland. A minority like this cannot be ignored." This was published in 1884 (laughter from the Nationalist members), not long before the great conversion, or, rather, great surrender. He failed to understand how men could change their opinions to such an extent in the course of a few months. (Ironical Nationalist cheers.) No such strong language could be found anywhere against the policy of Home Rule or repeal as was found in the speeches of the very men who were now supporting that policy. Lord Spencer, for example, once said:—

"We have to tell the Irish people that their just grievances will always be redressed, that we will extend to them every privilege and liberty that we Englishmen possess; but we must tell them plainly at the same time that no party in England, whether Conservative or Liberal, will put up with anarchy, and that in respect of the repeal of the Union we feel like the Americans when the integrity of their Empire was threatened, and that, if necessary, we must shed blood to maintain the strength and effect the salvation of the country."

Those who had heard the Prime Minister on the subject of the retention of the Irish members—"that indigestible diet"—might easily have imagined themselves to be in a debating forum in which the right hon. gentleman was taking both sides at once. (Laughter.) In Manchester, in 1886, the right hon. gentleman said, "I will not be a party to giving Ireland a legislative body to manage Irish concerns and at the same time to having Irish members in London acting and voting in Scotch and English concerns." What the right hon. gentleman then said he would not do was now going to be done. (Cheers, and Nationalist cries of "No.") Then it did not pass the wit of man to draw a distinction between local and Imperial affairs. On questions like the Egyptian question the Irish members would undoubtedly be permitted to vote, and might by their votes compel this country to incur great expenses, to which Ireland would contribute very little. The Prime Minister

said he was content to trust to the patriotism and generosity of the Irish Parliament to make willing subsidies in cases of emergency. He was not sure that the trust was well founded. Supposing the present Government were to lead the country into a war with France on the Egyptian question, would Ireland vote a subsidy to aid us? Would not France be more likely to make Ireland the basis of operations against England, as she had before? (Hear, hear.) One thing was clear, that under this Bill the British taxpayer was again called upon. In 1886 the proposed Irish tribute was between three and four millions; now the Irish were to pay two millions and the balance was to come out of the British taxpayers' pocket. As to the allegation that the Bill would bring finality, he should like to hear the right hon. member for the Bridgeton Division tell the House that at last he had discovered a half-way house between local government and separation. (Hear, hear.) If the Bill were passed Ireland would not be contented. They had the past history of Canada to guide them. There the French and English Canadians would not blend, and Lord Durham found it necessary to separate them and to grant them separate autonomies, and thus was laid the foundation of the practical independence of Canada. If this Bill passed there would be in Ireland two races under the conditions which in Canada led to civil war; and we should have to step in and separate them by giving separate autonomies to each. Of course the Bill would be accepted by all sections of the Nationalist party, who had always been straightforward in stating what they wanted. In 1886 the *Irish World* wrote that of course Mr. Parnell would support the Bill of that year, but the effect of every arrangement short of separation would be to leave Ireland in the position of a province. That was the policy of Mr. Parnell, who always refused to speak of finality, and said you could "not put limits to the aspirations of a nation." Mr. Parnell not only brought Home Rule to the front, but he brought to his knees the Prime Minister, from whom now he did not receive a single word of recognition. ("Oh.") The speech of the hon. member for North Kerry (Mr. Sexton) indicated that the Bill would not get rid of Irish difficulties in this House; his threatening attitude did not accord well with any idea of finality; and the fact was that if the Bill passed Irish affairs would occupy a week for every two days they occupied, with this difference, that the House now had power, but then it would have responsibility without power. (Hear, hear.) During seven years the Ministerial party had evaded the question of Ulster, and now the Prime Minister seemed to reproach it with being less rebellious than it was 100 years ago. If the rebels of 100 years ago were the Loyalists of to-day that seemed to show that experience of the Union had convinced them of its advantages. (Hear, hear.) But the Prime Minister and the Government had failed to express any sympathy with Ulster, as if Nationalists were the only Irishmen. He would ask the Government to consider whether they should not separate Ulster from the rest of the country. When the Secession occurred in the United States, the State of Virginia was found to be divided, and the Federal Government took in that part of the State which supported the North and left out the other part. That seemed a sensible course, and Ulster had a right to demand treatment of that kind. (Laughter.) The Imperial Parliament could cast Ulster off, but it had no right to place it under another Parliament which it detested. Talk of legislation in a "foreign

garb," would it not come in a foreign garb to Ulster from Dublin? From the recent action of the Education Board we knew what would happen. He invited the attention of the President of the Local Government Board, who was in a very interesting position (great laughter); he had chanted the responses while Archbishop Walsh had conducted the service. The Education Board had shown that they would tax the country for denominational education; by doing that they would tax Ulster, and Ulster would refuse to be taxed in this way. The resolutions passed by the great Belfast Convention showed the mind of Ulster on this question, and instead of union between Great Britain and Ireland, instead of union between the different parts of Ireland, he feared, if this Bill were passed, there would only be further agitation and civil war.

Mr. J. REDMOND observed that the right hon. gentleman the member for Bordesley, who in his later days had blossomed into an ardent supporter of coercion for Ireland, was in 1884 so strong an opponent of coercion and so ardent a Home Ruler that when the Irish Nationalist party in 1885 issued a manifesto to their supporters in England asking them to support the Tory candidate in the elections, an exception was made in favour of the right hon. gentleman. (Laughter and cheers.) He desired cordially to concur in the compliment which last night was paid by the hon. member for North Kerry to the Prime Minister. The spectacle of this aged statesman, who in 1886 was driven from office by a large majority at the polls, who during the seven years since then had maintained his position on the Irish question, and who came down at the end of those seven years to repeat, with an eloquence that "time cannot wither nor custom stale," his plea for freedom to a poor and long-suffering country, must arouse emotion in the mind of every man of every party. (Cheers.) The House would understand him when he said that the uppermost thought in his mind last night was not the presence of the Prime Minister, but the absence of the great Irishman, the real father of Home Rule (hear, hear)—the great Irishman who drove the Prime Minister and his party from the paths of coercion into which they had strayed and taught them that in concession to Irish national sentiment alone was to be found Irish content and Imperial safety. In a memorable cable message, sent by the member for East Mayo and the member for Cork to an equally memorable meeting in the Leinster-hall, that great Irishman was described as "a man who had brought the Irish people through unparalleled difficulties and dangers from servitude and despair to the threshold of emancipation by a genius, courage, and success unequalled in history." And, though it had become the fashion in these days to belittle his services or bury them in oblivion, the words of that cablegram were still true. When Mr. Parnell came to this House Home Rule was regarded as a chimera, every English party ridiculed and despised it, and all the vast and limitless resources of England were expended in the effort to crush Irish Nationalism and silence its voice; but in a few short years Mr. Parnell succeeded in driving from office first a Liberal and then a Conservative Government, and finally—and this was probably his greatest achievement—he succeeded in bringing the foremost Englishman of the day and the great Liberal party to recognize the claims of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) He did not grudge the Prime Minister his meed of praise for the courage and constancy of the last few years; but, for his own part, he would have no share in the ingratitude of those who showered

their praises to-day upon the living Englishman and shrank from mentioning the name of the dead Irishman but for whom, for all they knew, the present Prime Minister and his party might be proposing a Coercion Act instead of a Home Rule Bill. (Cheers.) Of the Bill itself it was impossible now to express any final or decided judgment. It did not need the appeal of the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy to prevent him and his friends from forming any rash judgment upon it. It would be manifestly impossible for any man to express a final or decided judgment upon a Bill of such complexity until they had it in print. The first criticism he would offer was this. Of the five conditions which the Prime Minister laid down as guiding him in the drafting of this measure one was that it should be, as far as possible, a final settlement. He was one of those who believed that, even in the ordinary legislation of that House, and still more in a measure of such complexity, it was the utmost folly to talk of finality. Mr. Parnell once said that it was impossible for any man to dare to set limits to the onward march of a nation. It was said that the Bill of 1886 had been accepted by the Irish party and Mr. Parnell. It was well that the exact words of Mr. Parnell on the first reading should be recalled to the recollection of the House. Mr. Parnell said:—"There are undoubtedly great faults and blots in the measure. The right hon. gentleman has had, I suppose, to shape his measure to meet the tremendous opposition evoked against him. There are several points which after the measure reaches its Committee stage I am determined to oppose very strongly, and to press for their serious modification and amendment." He had no hesitation in saying that in the Bill of last night there were serious blots, and it would be absolutely necessary to press for amendments of its provisions. He recognized the course through which a Bill of this kind would have to go. Nationalist members would press for amendments in one direction, Unionists would press for amendments in the opposite direction, and it was impossible for any man to tell in what shape the Bill would emerge from its Committee stage. (Hear, hear.) He should be a rash man therefore—and, indeed, the member for North Kerry did not attempt to follow such a course—who before the third reading would say whether the Bill was or was not likely to afford a final and satisfactory settlement of this great international question. Therefore, until the Bill was in print and they were in a position to study its details, and until they could see how much they might improve the Bill or its opponents damage it in Committee, it was impossible to express a decided judgment upon it. But there were certain broad lines in the Bill which were plainly intelligible. With the broad principle of the creation of an Irish Parliament with an Executive responsible to it, having the full control of Irish affairs with the exception of one or two Irish matters which were to be retained by the Imperial Parliament for a definite time, he was in thorough sympathy and accord. There were some matters which required investigation and discussion, and the first was the question which had been dealt with largely in the present debate, and which had formed a topic of discussion in every debate upon Home Rule—namely, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The hon. member for North Kerry had stated the previous night that no Irish Nationalist disputed that supremacy. But there were two ways of looking at this question. (Opposition laughter, and "Hear, hear.") Before the Union, as the Prime Minister had explained, there were two equal, distinct, and independent sovereignties, the

one consisting of the Sovereign, Lords, and Commons of England, and the other of the Sovereign, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, and upon that the argument was based that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament unquestionably rested upon the validity of the Act of Union. It was an historical fact that the Irish national sentiment had at all times disputed the validity of the Act of Union, and had founded itself upon the declarations made at the time of the Union debates in the Irish Parliament. The best specimen was contained in one of Plunkett's great speeches in opposition to the Union, in which he in express terms denied the competence of Parliament to do that act, and warned the House not to lay hands upon the Constitution, and that any such dealing with it under the circumstances would be a nullity, as the House was not elected for that purpose, and he declared that no man in Ireland would be bound to obey the Parliament. (Hear, hear.) The moment that Ireland was willing to accept any such arrangement as was contained in the present Bill, or as was proposed, for example, by Mr. Butt, the acceptance of any such arrangement would imply the abandonment by her of her argument founded on the nullity of the Union. If, therefore, this Bill were passed and accepted by Ireland that argument would be gone. The Prime Minister, in a significant phrase in his speech, had in solemn tones warned the House of what might follow the rejection of this measure or of similar proposals. Ireland was not now asking for repeal of the Union, she was not now insisting upon the argument of the nullity of the Union, but had expressed her willingness to accept this scheme which recognized the supremacy of Parliament over both Ireland and England. The right hon. gentleman had warned the House and the country that, if Ireland's moderation should be spurned and her moderate demand rejected, no one could tell whether she might not in the future fall back upon the nullity of the Union, and insist upon its repeal, instead of the compromise she was now willing to accept. (Hear, hear.) For the purposes of argument in discussing this proposal it was necessary to state, and he frankly stated, that the Irish members were perfectly willing to accept, if it should be offered to them, a measure which was based upon the validity of the Union and the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. That supremacy was manifestly an absolute and inalienable supremacy. Ireland had never asked for any curtailment of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, but it had always been admitted that if a compromise of the kind in question were accepted as a settlement between the two countries, the Parliament in England would retain the dual power, if it should think fit to do so, in the first place to take away the Parliament from Ireland, and, in the second place, to pass laws for Ireland in contravention of the wishes of the Irish Legislature. No better definition of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, as admitted by Ireland in relation to measures of this kind, could be found than that of the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in his speech on the Home Rule Bill of 1886, when he said it was not a question of divesting ourselves of the absolute omnipotence of Parliament, for we could not do so, and that the only one limitation on that omnipotence was that we could not bind our successors. The right hon. gentleman had said, "What is it that is proposed by this Bill? Why, to limit the right of legislating still resting on the Imperial Parliament, we have committed to the Irish Legislature the right to legislate upon subjects on which we do not intend to legislate ourselves."

What, then, did Irish members ask for? They asked that if this compromise between the full and extreme demand of Irish national sentiment and English feeling were carried out, if the validity of the Union and the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament were admitted, then some guarantee should be given that this Parliament would not exercise its right to legislate over the heads of Irishmen in those purely Irish concerns which were committed by the constitutional act to the Irish Parliament. (Cheers.) It was true that with reference to the colonies the Imperial Parliament did not, as a rule, or at least very seldom did, legislate in purely colonial matters over the heads of the colonies. But the cases of the colonies and of Ireland were entirely different. The hon. member for North Kerry had said that, in his view, the mere establishment of a Home Rule Parliament amounted to a compact between England and Ireland; that England would not legislate in the matters committed to the Irish Parliament; and he had gone further, and had said that in his opinion no declaration in a clause of the Bill to that effect would have the slightest value. With that he begged to differ, and he would cite as his witness the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who said in the speech from which he had quoted that such a compact or declaration had in practice the effect of binding successive Parliaments by imposing moral obligations on Parliament not to go contrary to the statute. Therefore, recognizing the manifest intention of the Government to confer on Ireland an unfettered control of purely Irish affairs, but being distrustful of future Imperial Governments, especially after the statement made by the leader of the Opposition as to how future Governments would use their power, he and his hon. friends asked that there should be in this Bill a declaration to the effect that in those matters specially committed to the charge of the Irish Legislature there should be no vexations or capricious interference of this Parliament, either by way of revision, amendment, or repeal, with Acts passed in the Irish Legislature within the limits of the Constitution conferred. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for North Kerry had used almost those words, so that on that point there was no difference between them. But the hon. member for North Kerry used another argument, from which he entirely differed. The hon. member took the view that the presence of the Irish members in the British House of Commons would be an additional guarantee against the capricious and vexatious interference of the Imperial Parliament. He himself took exactly the opposite view. (Hear, hear.) Why did not Parliament interfere in colonial matters? Because there were no colonial members sitting at Westminster, and because colonial affairs were not brought under the cognizance and discussion of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) If the Irish members were withdrawn, as proposed in the Bill of 1886, he believed that one great temptation to this Parliament to interfere in purely Irish affairs would also be withdrawn. (Hear, hear.) Unfortunately it was proposed to keep the Irish members at Westminster. It had been stated that probably the Irish Nationalist members would not attend; but in this case their absence would be a greater danger than their presence. Though they stayed away, the so-called "loyal" minority would be always with the British House of Commons. (Opposition cheers.) The representatives elected to the House of Commons from the constituencies which were hostile to the concession of Home Rule in any form would come to Westminster with the avowed

policy of wrecking the Constitution which had been given to Ireland. They would initiate debates on every conceivable Irish question, and their presence would be a standing temptation to this Parliament to interfere in matters with which, if there were no Irish members at Westminster, it would be very glad not to interfere at all. (Hear, hear.) Let there be no doubt on this point in the mind of any man. No scheme for the government of Ireland would be successful which constituted directly or indirectly the Imperial Parliament as a Court of Appeal on the acts of the Irish Legislature. Such a position would be intolerable for the House of Commons, and would be still more intolerable for the Irish people and the Irish Legislature. The position of the British Parliament would be far worse than it was now, if, after conceding a local Legislature to Ireland, it were to try to act as a sort of Court of Appeal to revise, or amend, or repeal the statutes of the Irish Parliament. (Hear, hear.) He now passed to the second point of great importance in the Bill—the question of the veto. The view he had expressed on this question had been perfectly clear and perfectly fair and reasonable. It was a mistake to say that any extreme claims had been put forward. Last October he spoke as follows:—"What we want to have made clear and unmistakable is that in the daily life of our new Parliament the veto of the Crown will be exercised constitutionally in accordance with the advice of the Irish Ministers, and will not be made a pretext for interference by the Imperial Parliament and by the English Cabinet in the government of those purely Irish affairs which are committed to the charge of the new Irish Legislature." He had always thought that the clause in the Bill of 1886 was plain—"Subject to any instructions which may from time to time be given by her Majesty, the Lord Lieutenant shall give or withhold the Royal assent to Bills," &c. Most Nationalists had interpreted that to mean that on purely local Bills the Lord Lieutenant's assent or dissent would depend on the advice of the Irish Cabinet. But, unfortunately, a discussion on the point was raised by Mr. Oscar Browning in England, which elicited from quite a number of gentlemen of eminence and authority various and widely different interpretations of this clause. Hence it was that a discussion was initiated in Ireland, though every effort was made to stifle it. He was glad to think that the result of that discussion had been satisfactory, because they had heard from the Prime Minister that in the new Bill the clause would read quite differently, and that there would be an express declaration that the Lord Lieutenant was to exercise his veto on the advice of the Irish Cabinet, except where instructions to the contrary were sent by her Majesty. That placed the practice about which there had been uncertainty absolutely beyond dispute. (Hear, hear.) If it were necessary to go further, some of the declarations made during the existing debate would go a long way to meet the apprehensions raised in Ireland. The Prime Minister had used this pregnant and significant phrase:—"They desired to give Ireland a Parliament which would have practically a separate and independent control of Irish affairs." With reference to any intolerant tyranny which, it was suggested, might be exercised by the majority he, for one, would not object to any power stepping in to save any minority in Ireland from injustice. But the phrase used by the Prime Minister had given rise to some doubt in the minds of some. The right hon. gentleman said that the Lord Lieutenant was to exercise the veto, not on the advice of his Cabinet, but

on the advice of the Executive Committee of the Privy Council. In his own mind, however, he presumed that this really meant the Cabinet of the day, which depended for every hour of its existence upon the support of a majority in the popular Assembly. He had listened with regret to the threats indulged in that evening by the leader of the Opposition. He thought that, in one sense, those threats were a hopeful sign as indicating somewhat of a change in his view. The right hon. gentleman felt that he was no longer fighting a theory, but that it was necessary for him to grapple with a reality; he foresaw that this was to be a more serious business than some of his supporters seemed to think; and so he stood up in the House and threatened that if his party should come back to power this veto would not be allowed to sleep, would not be reserved for cases of intolerable tyranny, but would be made use of to serve the petty interests of himself and his friends.

Mr. BALFOUR.—I do not know whether the hon. gentleman thinks he is quoting my words.

Mr. J. REDMOND.—I was giving the substance of them.

Mr. BALFOUR.—What I said was that it would not only be within the power, but that it would be the duty of every British Administration to interfere in every act which they deemed to be inconsistent with the rights or interests of any party in Ireland.

Mr. J. REDMOND, continuing, said that the Government of to-day proposed that the veto should be allowed to lie dormant, except in cases of tyranny; but the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition said that this might be all very well for the present Government, but that when he and his friends came back to power they would keep the weapon keen and sharp by constant use. He was not, however, dismayed by that threat. If such a state of things should arise in Ireland as would justify the exercise of this extreme power, it would exhibit a state of things which would morally justify the Imperial Parliament in taking the Irish Parliament away altogether. But he was not afraid that any such emergency would arise, and the threats of the right hon. gentleman upon this point would pass them as idle winds. They had always maintained that, upon the ordinary everyday work of the Irish Legislature, the veto should be exercised by the advice of the Irish Ministers. The *Daily News*, in writing with some apparent authority upon this question, stigmatized that demand as an obvious and palpable absurdity; but the Prime Minister and his colleague had taken a different view and had adopted the course which the *Daily News* had stigmatized as an obvious and palpable absurdity. (Opposition laughter.) He regarded as a most important matter that the Lord Lieutenant would cease to be a member of the Cabinet. The Bill of 1886 contained no such provision as that. He would say, at once, that the exercise of the veto by the Lord Lieutenant would be resented and distrusted in Ireland if he were to remain not merely, as now proposed, the representative of the Sovereign, but of the fleeting Governments that came and went upon the Treasury bench of the House of Commons. He would ask for information upon one point. The Prime Minister said it was his intention that the Irish Constabulary should be a disappearing force, and that the new police force should be under the control of the Irish Government, but that in the interval Ireland was to pay a million a year for the maintenance of the police. The right hon. gentleman, however, failed to tell them whether this was to continue

for a definite number of years. The Chief Secretary seemed to indicate last night that this would be the case. That being so, he had listened with the greatest disappointment for a definite statement upon the point in the speech of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He wished now to ask whether there was to be a set term, and, if so, of how many years. This was one of the points on which great controversy existed during the struggle, both in and after the meetings in Committee Room No. 15, and the subject was also insisted upon in the conference at Hawarden, as to the exact terms of which some conflict of testimony existed. He wanted to know whether or not the Bill proposed to leave the Royal Irish Constabulary for an indefinite period under Imperial control. They knew that whatever the interval was Ireland would have to pay two-thirds of the contribution, and if no term of years was stated he would have the gravest objection to that portion of the Bill.

Mr. J. MORLEY.—There is a term of years stated in the Bill.

Mr. J. REDMOND.—What is it?

Mr. J. MORLEY.—Six years.

Mr. J. REDMOND was glad to have heard that statement. But then he was forced to the reflection that a term of years for the control of the police and a term of years for the control of the land being in the Bill, and these being the two points upon which assurances were asked in Committee Room 15 from the right hon. gentleman the member for Mid Lothian, it was to be regretted that when both the contending parties united to ask him for even a private declaration upon these points he did not give it, although he must have known that if he had he would probably have saved Ireland from two years of internal discord and misery. So long as the term was definite he had no objection in principle to any temporary reservation of the land question. Indeed it might be a blessing for the Irish Parliament for two or three years to be relieved from the nightmare of the Irish agrarian question. But the period fixed would cover the exact period when the revision of the judicial rents under the Act of 1881 would come about, and it was therefore of enormous importance that while that question was reserved to the Imperial Parliament they should not touch either the numbers or the powers of the Irish members in that House. Mr. Parnell, whose declarations, advice, and warnings would, he believed, be repeated during this debate by men sitting in all quarters of the House, said in 1886 on this question that, "with the important and all-engrossing subject of agrarian reform, the constabulary control, and the judiciary appointment left under Imperial control, it would be the height of madness for any Irish leader to imitate Grattan's example and consent to disband the army that had cleared the way to victory." Therefore their position was that, so long as the Imperial Parliament retained control of purely Irish questions, in common justice they were bound to demand that they should be allowed to remain in full force in that House. As to the question of the division between Imperial and local affairs, he was one of those who believed that in the end the Prime Minister, who in his speech left it an open question to be decided by the majority of the House, would find that the task, in his own words, did baffle the wit of man, and that it would be impossible to make a proper division. (Opposition cheers.) But English, Scotch, and Welsh members must bear in mind that the Irish members had not asked to be kept at Westminster. The Imperial Parliament had forced this upon Ire-

land, and if certain anomalies and inconveniences followed to British members they must remember that it was their own doing, and also that it was, after all, only a temporary arrangement. He contended that, so long as any questions were reserved to the Imperial Parliament, the Irish members should be represented there in their full numbers and force. He would not dwell on the question of the appointment of the Judges, although he regretted that the Government should in this respect have made a backward step from the Bill of 1886, which gave all appointments to the Irish Government. On the question of finance, the leader of the Opposition said that night that even he, with all the information and knowledge at his disposal, found it impossible to deal accurately or fully with that question until he had seen the Bill. That being so, the House would easily understand why he did not attempt to go deeply into the subject. It seemed to him, however, that Ireland was treated in this Bill absolutely worse in this matter than in the Bill of 1886. In that Bill Ireland was called upon to contribute a sum amounting to between 1-14th and 1-15th of the total Imperial charges, whereas Ireland would be called upon under the present Bill to pay a much larger sum. Under the Bill of 1886 the first Budget the Prime Minister proposed for the Irish Parliament showed a surplus in favour of Ireland of £400,000. The first Budget in the right hon. gentleman's statement the other night showed a surplus in favour of Ireland of £500,000. But how was the balance made up? It was made up not of any additional generosity on the part of the Government of England, but by an increase in the Excise. As he understood it, the Excise was now at a higher figure than ever it was, and if the Excise fluctuated or diminished the whole of that surplus, or the greater part of it, might be swept away at one fell swoop. That was not satisfactory. It seemed to him to be the highest duty and interest of England, if a Home Rule Bill for Ireland was to be passed, to give to Ireland a Parliament under such conditions that she could have a fair hope of working it successfully. (Hear, hear.) If that new Parliament was to do any good it must set itself to improve the industrial condition of the country. In his belief there would be very little of politics in an Irish Parliament. (Opposition laughter.) It would devote itself to business matters and industrial concerns, and the first essential was that its credit should be good. How could its credit be good if its surplus was to depend on a speculative increase in the Excise, which many people thought might decrease and many thought ought to decrease? (Hear, hear.) The other question to which he wished to refer was the protection of minorities in Ireland. Personally he had rather a predilection in favour of the principle of two Chambers, but he did not wish to argue this matter from the point of view of theoretical predilection at all. He took a broader view of the question. He knew that there were classes of his countrymen who were distrustful of the majority of the Irish people, who thought, foolishly, as he believed, that the Irish Parliament would rush headlong into wild, reckless, and violent proceedings; and for their protection, therefore, he welcomed the provision of the two Chambers. He would not inquire too narrowly whether it was right to have a high franchise or whether the interval in the passage of a Bill before it could pass was too long; he looked at the question in the broadest possible way. He was anxious that the minority of his fellow-countrymen should have their rights and liberties protected, and, if it could be shown

to him that a better plan of protecting the minorities in Ireland, without violating any material and vital principle, could be devised than that of the Government, he would heartily approve even more stringent regulations in that direction. (Cheers.) He would say to his fellow-countrymen—" You need have no fear of the action of the Irish Legislature; you need have no fear of religious persecution; you may take it for granted that in that Legislature Roman Catholics, just as earnestly and as bravely as Protestants, will stand forward in defence of religious liberty." (Cheers.) In Ireland a new class of Irish politician would enter into that Legislature. (Laughter.) There would be fewer excited politicians of the type so well exemplified in his own person by the hon. and gallant member for North Armagh (laughter and cheers)—men who were precluded from public life in Ireland by the conditions of that life at present. Their ranks would be recruited from the commercial classes, the professional classes, from men engaged in various walks of life, but not men of independent fortunes, who were unable to neglect their business and come to Westminster. (Cheers.) One of the most extraordinary circumstances in the history of Ireland was the fact that she had been able during all these years to send and to support a band of men to Westminster to represent Nationalist opinions. The great majority of Irish members were poor men—men who could not afford to come to London were it not that their fellow-countrymen were in earnest, and were determined to place at their disposal the means to attend in St. Stephen's. (Cheers.) It was a circumstance for the members and the Irish people to be proud of. But the great Nationalist party in the Irish Parliament would be broken up into various groups, and it was absolutely necessary that men of more moderate views and of all sections should come together; and their fellow-countrymen, who to-day were apprehensive, would find before many years that their surest safeguard was not to be found in artificial provisions forged at Westminster, but in the good sense and patriotism of their countrymen. (Cheers.) He never had believed in the tall talk of Ulster. Experience had been gained of it in the past; and he had never known any benefit wrung by Nationalist labours in the House of Commons as to which the Ulster members were not the first to cut in and take their share of. (Laughter and cheers.) The Land Act of 1881 was pillage and spoliation; but the first men who went into the Land Courts to take advantage of the system by which the Nationalists had wrung that measure from the Imperial Parliament were the men in Ulster, who, it was now said, would not take advantage of the Home Rule Bill, but who instead would line the ditches behind the hon. and gallant member for North Armagh. (Laughter and cheers.) What he desired to say was that, in his opinion, this Bill, as he understood it, was defective in some very grave and important matters; that in some other matters it was exceedingly disappointing; and that in its financial aspect it was not only ungenerous, but absolutely unjust. And his view was that it would be the duty of Irish Nationalists, at any rate, to so mould the Bill that it might become a basis of settlement which, if not final in the powers it confers, will at least hold out the hope that the more acute phases of Irish misgovernment might immediately disappear, and that the future freedom and legitimate independence of Ireland would depend upon no outside forces, but upon the steadiness, the constancy, and the courage of the Irish people. (Cheers.)

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said it might be that many hon. members looked upon the Bill as an ordinary item of the Newcastle programme, but that was certainly not the view which the Ulster Unionist members took of it. For the province of Ulster this was a matter of life and death (hear, hear), and the Ulster members would be bound to oppose every clause of it. The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had stated that the Ulster farmers were more concerned about the reduction of rents than about Home Rule. Well, the right hon. gentleman was in Ulster at the time of the late general election, and he did his best to secure the election of the only five candidates that could be found to come forward to support his principles. Where were those five candidates now? (Cheers and laughter.) Was there one of them then in the House to support this Bill? (Cheers.) The Ulster members looked upon the Bill as a perpetual degradation and unjust coercion of the province. (Hear, hear.) They had been told that Ireland had not received the equality of laws which had been promised her. Where had the inequality existed? He had no hesitation in affirming that Ireland had had more legal privileges granted her than either England or Scotland. The land laws in Ireland were infinitely better than those in England or Scotland. (Hear, hear.) The Church in Ireland was disestablished in obedience to Irish demands, though it had not been disestablished in other parts of the United Kingdom; Ireland had had national education for 60 years, which could hardly be said of England; and as to repressive laws, only such laws of the kind had been passed as would have been enacted by even an Irish Parliament itself in face of the same dangers. (Hear, hear.) Ulster, which was settled and planted 200 years ago by England, asked for no privileges and no rights; she simply asked to be allowed to carry on her commerce and business in a peaceable way, and to have the protection of the law in doing so. The right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister had said that Ulster had changed and might change again, and he pointed to the fact that the Protestants of Ulster in the last century were opposed to the Union. The descendants of the rebels of the last century were the strongest Unionists now. The descendants of the Volunteers, their most determined opponents, were loyalists now (hear, hear), and the mere fact that these men were loyal to-day proved the ability and the willingness of the Imperial Parliament to concede their just demands. The Prime Minister referred to the peaceful character of the agitation conducted by the hon. gentlemen opposite. He thought that a most remarkable statement for the right hon. gentleman to make. Did he forget the Land League Eden—years stained with blood (hear, hear), boycotting, robbery, and crime? Why, then, come down and plead "the peaceful character of the agitation"? (Cheers.) The agitation had not been peaceful, and the feeling in parts of Ireland was as much against the Home Rulers as against Home Rule. Crime had followed their steps. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had said that he was prepared to trust them, but he had cleared out of Ireland and all belonging to him. (Laughter.) He preferred to trust in the evidence of those who had something to lose. (Cheers.) As to the question of appeal, he understood the Prime Minister to say there was to be an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but that the appeal was to be on the initiative of the Viceroy or the Secretary of State. That differed widely from the right of appeal in the colonies. In Canada, every

person aggrieved had the right of challenge. If the appeal was to be limited, as he had stated, then it would be bereft of much of its value.

Mr. BRYCE said there was no obscurity about it. Every person who considered himself aggrieved by the Irish Legislature acting in excess of its powers was entitled to appeal. (Hear, hear.) Where an Act was passed before there was time for the judicial proceedings, and where it was thought desirable to establish its constitutionality with the view of a more speedy and direct decision, powers were given the Viceroy or Secretary of State to refer the question to the Judicial Committee.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said he was glad to have elicited that statement. As to the minority of Ireland he preferred the control given by the Bill of 1886 to the control given by this Bill. The proposed Legislative Council might be a useful body, and he did not object to the principle of a Second Chamber; but he did not see how a Chamber of 48 members could protect a minority against a Chamber of 103 members in the sense in which the protection of a minority had been spoken of. It was said there were clauses in the Bill dealing with religious freedom, and so there were in the Bill of 1886, but they were most unsatisfactory. It was proposed to prevent the establishment of any religion by one clause, but by another it was proposed that the Irish Assembly might endow forms of education. But you could not endow a form of religion more effectively than by endowing education. Was it proposed in this Bill to prevent the majority from taxing the minority for sectarian education? Within the last two months Archbishop Walsh had done his best, behind the back of Parliament, by a resolution of the National Board of Education, to change the whole character of the education and to put it upon sectarian lines. They did not want sectarian education and would not have it. The American Constitution prevented Congress from establishing any religion, and the public schools remained unsectarian in spite of all the efforts of sectarians to change their character. Would the Government protect the Irish minority from being taxed by the Irish Legislature to support Roman Catholic education? That was a fair question to ask. It was most extraordinary that the land question, which dominated every other question in Ireland, had been treated by the Prime Minister as a mere postscript to his speech, which occupied but three lines in the newspapers. He supposed the land question was reserved for three years and then it was to be committed to the Irish Assembly. He had no land and was totally unaffected; but the Chief Secretary had said in a speech at Cheltenham some years ago that the late Liberal Government, greatly to their honour, had passed an Act to prevent landlords from confiscating the property of their tenants, and he did not think we should be able to deal satisfactorily with the land question until we had passed similar legislation to prevent tenants from confiscating the property of their landlords. (Hear, hear.) But there was one hon. member opposite whose idea of a fair settlement of the land question was that every landlord should receive a single ticket from Dublin to Holyhead; and this Bill proposed to leave this Irish land question to be settled by members who held such opinions. Lord Spencer, speaking, he believed, at Newcastle, had said that the whole course of Irish agitation had been against the landlords, and for the moment it would not be just or honest to leave landlords unprotected and uncared for. Apparently Lord Spencer had got rid of his principles

of justice (hear, hear), for he was going to leave the landowners unprotected and uncared for, and to hand them over to men who had made no secret of their intentions and who had carried on an agitation with the express object of ruining the landlords. England had planted the Irish land system in Ireland and was responsible for it, and it would be the meanest, shabbiest performance on the part of England to say to the landowners, " You have served our purpose ; you have been our garrison ; you have earned the enmity of the people in consequence ; we have, however, done with you, and we hand you over to your enemies who may do as they like with you three years hence." (Cheers.) Speaking with reference to the police the hon. member for North Kerry said on Monday that in the new Ireland about to be created there would be little work for the police. He supposed the hon. member said that on the principle that where there would be no law there would be no transgression. (Laughter.) In America a very interesting side light was thrown upon this question by what had occurred in Massachusetts. In 1885 the Irish captured the city of Boston (laughter), and installed an Irish mayor in the civic chair. The American citizens appealed to the Legislature of Massachusetts, saying, " We are not going to trust the peace and prosperity of the city of Boston to an Irish mayor" (hear, hear), and the Legislature in 1885 passed an Act taking the control of the police from the mayor and civic council of Boston and vested it in commissioners, and that state of things continued to the present day. This was the explanation of the extraordinary circumstance that Boston, the seat of the Legislature, had not the control of her own police affairs. With respect to the question of the retention of the Irish members he would say a word or two. In May, 1886, hon. members on the side of the House where he was now sitting voted for the second reading of a Bill which excluded the Irish members from that Chamber. In July they with one consent argued for the retention of the Irish members. Their conduct reminded him of the American editor who was ordered to reverse his policy and telegraphed back—" It is a sharp curve but I will take it." (Laughter.) What was the policy of the Liberal party now ? They had none ; it was a case of " go as you please," the Government saying, " You can vote either for the retention of the Irish members or not, just as you like." The Government in fact did not know what to do. He could understand that the Government should wish to retain the Irish members, for the House of Commons would be an unconscionably dull place without them. (Laughter.) There were in Ireland, as everyone knew, a large number of not very intelligent voters, illiterates and others. With three constituencies, one for this Parliament, one for the Legislative Council, and one for the Assembly, the Irish peasant would be absolutely bewildered, and the result would be that the priest would be supreme over all, and director of everybody's conscience in the matter. (Hear, hear.) Supposing the Liberal party had gone to the country and told the people—" Here is our programme, but we are going to introduce the Irish Home Rule Bill first"—a Bill of the character now disclosed—where would have been the great Liberal party to-day ? (Laughter.) They would thereby have confessed their incompetence to pass one of the measures in their programme, and did they think the electors were such idiots as to place in power a party with a programme which they were unable to carry out ? The difficulty of excluding the Irish members was as great ; and it would be found out that the right hon.

member for Bridgeton was right when he said there was absolutely no half-way house between separation and Home Rule. As far as the Ulster members were concerned, they had a fixed determination to resist the Bill. The commerce, the agriculture, the trade of Ulster were fiercely hostile to it. If the Government had proposed to protect the minority they could have done it as was done under the American Constitution by the article declaring that all property should be sacred and contracts inviolable. How many Home Rulers would there have been then ? The Government were simply initiating a squalid war of races, and that which James and Tyrconnel failed to do they were not likely to accomplish. (Cheers.)

On the motion of **LOED R. CHURCHILL**, the debate was then adjourned.

ASSISTANT COUNTY SURVEYORS (IRELAND) BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill, but progress was immediately reported.

NEW LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

This Bill was read a second time.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 12 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15.

The SPEAKER took the chair shortly after 2 o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Clapham Junction and Paddington Railway, Edgware Road and Victoria Railway, and Glasgow Corporation Bills were read a second time.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (VOTING AND QUALIFICATION) BILL.

Mr. LOGAN, in rising to move the second reading of the Local Authorities (Voting and Qualification) Bill, said there was nothing which caused so much irritation in rural parishes as the present method of electing Poor Law guardians. (Hear, hear.) If the residents in our larger towns had not been able, by means of their numbers, to defeat the pernicious system now existing in our rural districts, and if they had been subjected to the annoyance and annual disappointment experienced in those districts, there would long ago have been a radical reform of the law in connexion with the election of Poor Law guardians upon the local boards. But it was not alone the annoyance and irritation which had induced the promoters of this Bill to bring it in. What they were most concerned about was the absence in rural districts under the present system of any real or effective control by the people of the district over the election of those who practically dominated the last days of a large number of men who had all their lives worked hard for wages which did not allow them to put by anything for their old age—and, to the shame of England be it said, there were at the present moment numbers of such men in every parish in the country—men who had served their country faithfully and well and yet were stigmatized as paupers, deprived of their rights as citizens, and compelled to eke out existence on a miserable pittance. (Hear, hear.) There were many districts in which the deserving poor were treated with almost brutal harshness. He could refer to cases in his own constituency in proof of this. He knew of cases where these poor people were subjected to a petty tyranny, and he appealed to hon. members to recall to their own minds cases with which they must be familiar. What they complained of was that no matter how harsh a guardian might be there were no powers by which they might remove that man. Such men had only to preach the keeping

down of the rates to be sure of the support of owners and occupiers. The squire and the parson and three or four farmers were able to defeat at least 40 cottagers, even supposing that they dare oppose them. He was aware that 60 years ago, when the present system was established, property was a god. He was not making any attack upon the rights of property, yet he ventured to say that he would be a bold man who would stand up and place the rights of property before the rights of humanity. (Hear, hear.) He spoke on behalf of the poor agricultural labourer, whose wages were so low as to preclude any hope for the future beyond parish relief and the detested workhouse. As far back as 1878 a committee sat to inquire into the method of electing Poor Law guardians. The inquiry was a most exhaustive one, but the recommendations of the committee had not yet been carried out. The committee reported that the abuses of the voting-paper system were very grave and that the ballot system would be cheaper. All these suggestions they had embodied in the Bill. The main provisions of the Bill were—as to the franchise they had followed the precedent set by the late Government in local government so that one register might suffice for Parliamentary, County Council, and Local Board elections. Occupiers only should have votes and each elector would have but one vote in each union. As to qualification they had adopted the Municipal Corporations Act as their basis, every elector being qualified for election. It was proposed that women should be eligible for election; and that the members should be elected for three years, all to retire together. The voting would be by ballot. (Hear, hear.) They also provided in the Bill for the grouping of small parishes. One guardian would be given to 500 electors, and between 500 and 1,000 two guardians, and one guardian for every additional 500 electors. He thought that in large towns this scale would have to be modified. He admitted that the power was being given under the Bill into the hands of the occupier, but after all the occupiers paid the rates. He concluded by moving the second reading of the Bill.

SIR J. DORINGTON thought they ought to be very careful in interfering with the wisely administered Poor-Law system set up in 1832. He ventured to suggest to the hon. member who brought in this Bill that the Government were about to bring in a measure for the establishment of district and parish councils, in which the whole subject of voting for local bodies would have to be dealt with. In these circumstances he thought that it was inopportune to bring forward such a measure as this, which merely dealt with the fringes of a great subject, while it was quite within the bounds of possibility that boards of guardians might be abolished altogether before this Bill could become law. (Hear, hear.) In that case the House would be merely wasting its time in discussing this measure. The hon. member who introduced this Bill had spoken of the necessity that existed for assimilating the vote for local bodies with that given for Parliamentary purposes, but in his opinion that necessity did not exist, because there was a great difference between local administration and Parliamentary government. In the case of local administration care must be taken that those who contribute the largest share to the rates should have, at all events, some control over the expenditure. He fully admitted that the local bodies ought to include representatives of all classes, and he would not exclude from such bodies the representatives of even the most humble class. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, those who contributed the largest share of the

rates ought not to be altogether shut out from representation on such bodies. (Hear, hear.) He did not believe that the labouring classes were unreasonable in their desires. Even in such matters as the extension of outdoor relief they were right from their own point of view, and when they met the representatives of the wealthier classes upon the local bodies they might be convinced in cool conversation that it would not be right, in the interests of all classes, to extend that principle too far. (Hear, hear.) He should suggest that plural voting should be abolished in all cases, that *ex-officio* guardians should be done away with, and that there should be an owner's representation as distinguished from an occupier's representation, coupled with a division of the rates between the owners and the occupiers. (Hear, hear.) In that way access would be insured to both sides to representation on the local bodies which were concerned in the administration of local affairs. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BENNETT thought that the hon. member who had introduced this Bill might well rest satisfied at having called forth the admirable speech of the hon. baronet opposite. (Hear, hear.) All that the hon. member asked for in his Bill was that which Parliament had already granted by the Municipal Reform Act of 1885, which did, in fact, include the principle of a very strong measure of local self-government. Surely, it could not now be maintained that this measure was asking anything more than had been found successful, safe, and profitable in the boroughs.

Mr. J. G. LAWSON said that he believed it was a custom, which had almost grown into law, for a new member to appeal to the indulgence of the House. He wished to make a few observations upon the Bill, because he represented a large rural constituency and because he found that there was a very strong feeling upon the subject of this measure in the country districts. The name of the measure bore a decidedly neutral aspect—it was called the "Local Authorities (Voting and Qualification) Bill"; but its real and full name ought rather to be, "A Bill to deprive those who pay the bulk of the rates of all power over their expenditure." (Cheers.) Such a measure as this ought not to be brought in by private members, but by the Government of the day. It was like taking the bread out of the mouth of the Government, and he was waiting for some member on the Treasury bench to get up and rebuke hon. members for bringing forward this Bill in the face of the allusion in the Queen's Speech to the proposals which were to be made for local government reform, including parish councils. Those who brought forward the present Bill appeared hardly satisfied with it. The Bill would effect a revolution in rural economy. The hon. member who moved the second reading had laid great stress on the fact that this measure would deal with rural districts; and the last speaker had referred to the Parliament of 1832, the grand men who composed it, and the great measures which it produced. But he would like to point out that one of the grand measures passed by that Parliament in 1834 was now to be practically revoked by the present Bill. It was the Radical party who, in 1834, had established plural voting, vote by proxy, and so on; and it was hon. members of the same party who now proposed to do away with those provisions. There was no hurry for passing this Bill, as an election could not take place under its provisions until a year hence. Some of the magistrates would, no doubt, consent to stand for election as guardians; but was a country gentleman to live in a perpetual atmosphere of elections? Mr. John Stuart Mill—as

great an authority as Ruskin, who had been quoted to the House upon the subject of representative government—had said:—"In the peculiar constitution of English society, I have no doubt of the beneficial effect of this provision for *ex-officio* guardians." With regard to the plural vote, he would ask was it so shocking to the love of symmetry, so great an eyesore to the advocates of a dead level throughout society, that they could not bear to wait until the present Government were able to deal with the matter? The plural vote was created by a Radical Parliament in 1834 and it had lived for the last 50 years through many Radical majorities in this House. It was approved of by Mill and other Radicals in their writings. Under the present system of voting papers more men and women voted than would vote if they had to go to the polling-booth. The Select Committee in 1878 on the Election of Poor Law Guardians had come to a decision absolutely adverse to the views of those who brought in this Bill, for they reported that it was not advisable to extend the system of election by ballot to the election of local authorities. The reasons they gave against its adoption were the inconvenience to the voter of personal attendance at the polling-booth; the increased expense of the election, both on the rates and on the candidate, who had necessarily to provide against personation; and the probability that the elections would be determined on political grounds. No doubt hon. members opposite would be glad to see local questions fought on political grounds, but hon. members on his side of the House were by no means in favour of the extension of political considerations to our local affairs. (Ministerial cries of "Oh, oh," and cheers.) As to the present system of voting by proxy, if it was largely exercised it showed that there must be a considerable number of owners of property who did not live in the locality where the elections took place, and, therefore, this Bill would be a gigantic disfranchising Bill. (Cheers.) If, however, few availed themselves of the right, was it worth while to inflict a *maximum* of injustice in order to gain a *minimum* advantage in favour of symmetry? (Hear, hear.) The Committee of 1878 had reported in favour of the vote by proxy. This Bill was introduced by a syndicate of Radical members who sat for agricultural constituencies and who were desirous of proving to the agricultural labourers that Codlin was their friend and not Short. The middle-class ratepayer regarded the matter with peculiar apathy; to him the rise of rates was like a fall of rain, a matter to be grumbled at and borne. If there was any check at all upon the rates it came from the large ratepayers, and from them it was proposed by the Bill to take away all power. The result would be that the rates would increase, and those who had brought in the Bill for the sake of showing that they were the friends of the agricultural labourer would find that they had lost rather than gained favour by their measure. He objected to the Bill, because it introduced fresh confusion into the areas of local government. There should, in his opinion, be one elective body in each locality for all local business, in place of the present system, under which the powers of local government were distributed between the school board, the vestry, the burial board, the highway board, and the board of guardians. That was a reasonable scheme, and was worth waiting for if they could get it in its completeness. A locality might be able to provide one board of competent men for dealing with all these matters, while it could not be expected to provide five or six; and,

on the other hand, competent men might consider that on these petty boards their sphere of usefulness was so limited that it was not worth their while to join in the work at all. Then, with regard to the extension of local government, it was absolutely impossible for the Government to adopt the Poor Law unions as their unit for district councils, because they were of such a variety of sizes, and because nearly one-third of them cut the county boundaries. Could not hon. gentlemen opposite wait till the Government which they supported fulfilled their pledges? What were they afraid of? Was it the memory of broken pledges in the past, or was it the shadow of an impending dissolution? (Cheers.) All parties would agree that this was not a matter which should be attended to by a private member, and, being a matter which tended in the direction of increasing the burdens upon the already suffering agricultural interest, and a matter which the Government were pledged up to the hilt to deal with, he thought it undesirable that the House should give the Bill a second reading.

Mr. LUTTRELL said that, as the representative of a large rural constituency, he gave the Bill his full and outspoken support. They had been told from the opposite side that they had been "too previous," but he would remind the House of the speeches made last week, in which Liberal county members were taunted with having shown no eagerness to redeem the pledges on which they were returned. They did not speak when speaking would have meant the delay of legislation; they preferred to speak when speaking would mean the allaying of grievances. There were a large number of grievances in the rural districts, and the Liberal members for those districts had promised to do their utmost to abolish some, at any rate, of those grievances. The present system of electing boards of guardians was extremely unsatisfactory. The plural vote was unfair to the people at large; and it was a form of that class legislation to which Liberals were averse. The poor man was as much interested—indeed, he was even more interested in the good government of his parish than the wealthy man. To him questions of sanitation and Poor Law administration were more important than to the squires, who were careful to have their houses properly constructed and were not likely to go to the workhouse. With regard to the members of boards of guardians, he thought the money qualification was unfair to the poorer classes. They owed a debt of gratitude to the President of the Local Government Board for reducing the money qualification to £5, though a large number of members would like to see it abolished altogether. But if it was thought right that they should have a money qualification, why should they not have a proportional money qualification? His opinion was that the poor man had quite as much stake in the country as the wealthy man, and he believed he would be just as much opposed to any undue or wanton expenditure of rates as the wealthy man. The House should look at this matter from the higher standpoint of justice to the people. Another important provision in the Bill was that no one should be allowed to act unless he were chosen by the people. It was not right that justices of the peace should sit on boards of guardians *ex officio*. It was because he conceived this measure to have in it the essential characteristics of the rights of the people and to contain a further extension of representative government that he gave it his cordial and outspoken support. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BARTLEY thought all must agree that the present system of electing guardians was unsatis-

factory, and that something ought to be done in the direction of amending it. Every one must see that the voting-paper system was an undesirable one. There were, however, several points in the Bill which seemed to him very objectionable. He could not see why justices of the peace should not sit on boards of guardians. He had known cases in which their presence had been very beneficial. There was no doubt something to be said against the plural vote, but the system proposed by the Bill seemed to him to lead to the caucus system of election, which would be very dangerous and unsatisfactory. Then he thought that some arrangement should be made by which the minority vote should be secured. He also objected very much to the election of the board for three years. He thought that one-third should go out every year so as to maintain the continuance of the board. He should not oppose the measure, as he thought the time had come for modifying the mode of election of guardians, but he should reserve to himself the right of modifying several of the provisions in Committee. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. F. STEVENSON thought that so far from hindering the Government in their dealing with this question, this Bill, if passed, would strengthen their hands. There were three all important principles involved in the measure. The first was the qualification of guardians themselves. That had been met in part by the bold and benevolent action of the President of the Local Government Board, but he trusted that what his right hon. friend had done might be extended still further. Secondly, with regard to the system of voting papers. That was a very cumbersome system, and he did not think there would be any difficulty in substituting voting by ballot for that system. He did not agree with the limitation of this measure to boards of guardians and local boards of health, but would have preferred that the Bill should have included all local authorities. There were certain points of detail that might be amended in Committee, but he hoped every hon. gentleman on that side would give unhesitating support to the motion.

Mr. A. SMITH considered that some reform was required in the matter and would not oppose the second reading.

Mr. STRACHEY, speaking as a landlord, was not frightened at the Bill, and as to its general principles gave it his hearty support. It was highly desirable that they should get rid of the *ex-officio* element in boards of guardians, and if *ex-officio* guardians were elected by their own parishes he believed they would continue to sit on the boards. He heartily approved the general objects of the Bill.

BARON F. DE ROTHSCHILD agreed generally with the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, and felt that in the last few years the education of agricultural labourers had so much improved that it was absolutely necessary they should have an opportunity of taking part in local administration. He had an objection to the Bill on two grounds—first, that they ought to wait to see whether the principle of this Bill were embodied in the measure which the Government had promised to introduce; and, second, if the Government Bill did not become law this year, and this Bill did, they would get only half a measure instead of a whole measure. Boards of guardians would be entirely remodelled, and the majority of the representatives would be men who did not bear a proportionate share of the taxation of the country. He did not wish to oppose the Bill, but he hoped the hon. member who moved the second reading would see his way to withdraw the Bill (cries of "No")

until such time as the Government could make their larger proposal.

Mr. WARNER said that hon. members urged the promoters of the Bill to wait for the Government measure dealing with parish councils; but there was no assurance given that, even when that measure came on, it would meet with the support of the Opposition. The Radical party were bound to get the present Bill forward as far as possible. Although all sorts of objections had been urged to the details of the Bill, no one had ventured to object to the abolition of plural voting.

Mr. LONG said that there seemed to be some misapprehension among hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House. One hon. member had said that he, as a landlord, was not afraid of the consequences of the Bill. But no one on the Opposition side of the House in their criticism of the provisions of the Bill had been moved by any fear for themselves from the results of the Bill. Hon. gentlemen who claimed to represent the agricultural interest in the Liberal party seemed to be unaware that the right to sit on boards of guardians *ex officio* had, as a matter of fact, not been regarded as a great privilege by those entitled to exercise it. A very large number never exercised the *ex officio* rights at all. The right hon. gentleman now at the head of the Local Government Board, and those hon. members who sat in the last Parliament, would not accuse the late President of the Local Government Board—whose absence from the House all who knew him would regret (hear, hear)—of any want of appreciation of the necessity for bringing local administration into keeping with the principles and conditions which governed the Parliamentary franchise. It was not from any fear of change, nor from any opposition to principle, that this measure had been criticized. Hon. members did not realize the importance of the administration which was to be dealt with by the Bill. If it were desirable that the change should be made, and if it were the case—as he admitted—that the existing condition of things was an anomaly, the Bill ought to be proposed and carried by a responsible Government and a responsible Minister. (Cheers.) There were few questions which were of greater interest and importance than the administration of the Poor Law, or which, if trifled with or dealt with in a wrong direction, would more seriously and lastingly affect the lives and happiness of a great portion of the community. Appeals had been made by hon. gentlemen opposite on behalf of agricultural labourers. The agricultural labourer had as many and as staunch friends on the Opposition side of the House as on the Government side, and there was as strong a desire among them that the lot of the agricultural labourer should be improved. But was it certain that the Bill before the House would have that effect? (Cheers.) It was said that this question was of more importance to the labourer than to the squire. If that were so, it was the more necessary not to undertake any reform the beneficial results of which were doubtful. (Hear, hear.) He should like to impress upon hon. gentlemen opposite that before they embarked upon the difficult and dangerous course of Poor Law reform it would be well for them to digest the reports of the Commission on the subject. Those reports told them as plainly as possible of the necessity of proceeding carefully and cautiously, and of the dangers which might follow from bad administration. He was not afraid to trust the people, and he had given the best proof of it by having had some share in carrying through the greatest democratic measure on the Statute-book—the Local

Government Act (hear, hear); but what was the position in which they were going to place men called upon to elect boards of guardians in the smaller rural unions? As far as the urban unions went, he did not think the proposal would have any effect one way or the other, but in the small rural unions, the temptation would be that men would be asked to support those who would give liberal and generous outdoor relief, in order that friends or relations or sufferers in their neighbourhoods might get that relief which appeared more humane than the workhouse test. Before the passing of the great Poor Law Act of 1834 the condition of this country was remarkable alike for its misery and pauperism, and although he did not claim that that Act alone had brought about the steady and great improvement since those days, he maintained that the better administration, the more careful inquiry, had largely contributed towards the improvement in the condition of the workers of the country. He impressed upon the Government the importance of the problem with which they were called upon to deal. The measure was supported on the ground that it would improve the condition of the workers, especially in the rural districts. That might be done by securing to them by honourable means a better return for their day's or week's work, and by improving the homes of the workers, but they would not do it by hurriedly bringing into existence local authorities constituted on a new basis and elected practically on new theory, who might forsake the sound principles that had guided the administration of the Poor Law for 60 years. If a scheme dealing with a portion of the Poor Law was to be dealt with, it should be introduced by the Government and should embrace Poor Law administration in the country generally. There should be large unions. He believed that what was wanted was a reform of the Poor Law which should have for its object the merging of some of the smaller unions, creating larger unions carrying larger responsibility, and thereby minimizing the risk of pressure upon guardians by individual requests for out-door relief. A large measure could be brought in dealing with the whole question from top to bottom, and then these proposals would be supported by members in all quarters of the House, who would co-operate in endeavouring to improve the Poor Law as a whole, but who objected to proceeding in a piecemeal way. They contended that the proposed change was a serious one. It might have good results or bad results; but they asked the House to proceed with caution and care in dealing with the Poor Law, which was so closely connected with the best interests of the working classes. Therefore he suggested that the Bill should be withdrawn and her Majesty's Government left to deal with the matter.

SIR C. DILKE said he was sorry that so few members heard the admirable speech of the hon. and learned baronet the member for the Tewkesbury Division (Sir J. Dorington), because there was a great difference between that speech and the speech of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. The latter indicated that great evils might—he did not say would—follow the adoption of the principles of the Bill; but the hon. baronet did not take that line; he did not suggest that any of those evils were likely to result, and he only suggested that if the rate were divided between owner and occupier the former should be represented. There was one union established by a local Act—Chichester—in which there had never been a qualification, and none of the evils of lavish administration had prevailed in it; on the

contrary, there had been the strongest objection to it. It would be easy to abolish all qualifications and all plural votes in all local elections, and that could be done in a form that would be shorter than this Bill. A speedy change in the law was called for by many more evils than had been stated in the debate. There were great numbers of miners, ironworkers, and makers of boots and shoes who lived outside of corporation boroughs. Kettering had just reached the point in population which necessitated a change in qualification, and therefore some of the best members of the local board had had to give up their seats. Merthyr had not a town council because the coal-owners opposed the incorporation of the town, so that workmen could not be members of the governing body, as they might be if this Bill passed. (Hear, hear.) He could name another district in which industrial workers had no local power because some persons had 12 votes to their one. Although, by the wise action of the President of the Local Government Board, the qualification for guardians had been lowered, there were many districts in which the order did not take effect because, under special local Acts, the board of guardians, with a high qualification, were the only financial authority. Our experience of county councils and municipal corporations showed that Conservatives of distinction sought and secured the votes of the people, and that the absence of qualification led to the election of a council of only one or two working men, whose presence alone was beneficial. We need be under no apprehension of any great change in the constitution of the local bodies, and even those who had been *ex-officio* members would be all the better for having to be elected by the popular vote. (Hear, hear.)

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said that, without going for the moment into the merits or demerits of the Bill, he regarded it as a measure which ought to be submitted to Parliament on the authority of the Government of the day. (Hear.) The House had been told that Poor Law administration was a question which had been engaging the attention of the Government, and that they were prepared to deal with it. Why, then, did her Majesty's Government allow the subject to be taken out of their hands, and introduced upon the responsibility of an irresponsible member of the House. (A laugh.) He denied that there was, as some supposed, a general concurrence of opinion on the Opposition side of the House in favour of the abolition of what was erroneously called the plural vote, but which might be called more aptly the multiple vote. On this point the hon. member for North-East Suffolk, he was sorry to say, entirely depreciated the authority of the late Mr. Mill.

MR. F. STEVENSON said that no one had a greater respect for Mr. John Stuart Mill than he had, but if quoted as an authority in favour of the plural vote, he might also be quoted as an authority in favour of protection in rising colonies. (Hear, hear.)

MR. JAMES LOWTHER.—And a very wise opinion of Mr. Mill. (Laughter.) He had himself on several occasions been a supporter of Mr. Mill. He had voted with him in favour of the representation of minorities. (A laugh.) But without relying too much upon his authority he regretted as a humble supporter of Mr. Mill (a laugh) to see an hon. member sitting immediately behind her Majesty's Ministers endeavouring to discount so eminent an authority. In the opinion of a very large number of Conservatives throughout the country, a very great mistake had been made in not embodying in the Local Government Bill some system similar to the multiple vote.

which was drafted in the Sturges Bourne Act. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill actually proposed to abolish the ownership vote altogether—that was to say, the vote of men who actually defrayed a very large portion of the cost, and who day by day were subjected to heavier local burdens of every description. The old Liberal party always maintained that representation and taxation should go together. That principle was supposed to be under the special guardianship of the old Whig and Liberal party. But now they made proposals for throwing more and more burdens on the class of owners whose voting power was reduced to the lowest possible limit, so that the man who paid the piper was not allowed to call the tune. Therefore he was justified in saying that this Bill was founded upon entirely unsound principles. He did not deny that there was a good deal which required amendment in the present Poor Law system. He attached very little importance to the *ex-officio* question. His own attendance as an *ex-officio* had not been very good. No attempt had been made by the magistracy of this country to unduly push themselves with the view of overbearing the elected members. Voting papers were now distributed too near the day of the poll, and in other respects the machinery employed was capable of improvement. Nor was he prepared to deny that a case had been made out for the introduction of voting by ballot. In times past he was not a great advocate for the system, but he always said that the time would come when mob law and intimidation would make the ballot a valuable safeguard. (Ironical cheers and laughter.) He confessed that recent electoral history had confirmed him as to the wisdom of that plan. Under the system of compound householders, the so-called ratepayer, to use an Hibernicism, paid no rate at all (a laugh), and he prevented intrusions upon his own pocket by periodical inroads upon the pockets of other people. (A laugh.) Reference had been made to what was called "the Tory democracy." He confessed he did not know what it meant. (Laughter and cheers.) But he did know that there was in the country a very strong reaction against revolutionary doctrines even if supported by members of the Conservative party. (Laughter.)

Mr. H. FOWLER said that before he referred directly to the Bill he wished to concur in the tribute of appreciation and admiration which had been paid to the new members on both sides who had taken part in the debate, and who had given promise of adding greatly to the debating power and legislative efficiency of the House. (Hear, hear.) As to the views of the Government with respect to the Bill, he might say that the Bill was not one for reforming the principles of the Poor Law, but simply to effect some alterations in its administration. He should be sorry to say one word in depreciation of that wonderful monument of wise legislation; for the advantages which had accrued to the country from the Poor Law, alike economically and socially, could not be exaggerated. (Hear, hear.) The Government had no desire whatever to interfere rashly with its working; and they would proceed tentatively and slowly in dealing with the principles of its administration, confronted as they were with one of the most difficult problems of the day, the best mode of dealing with those paupers whose pauperism arose from old age and inability to work. (Hear, hear.) They had appointed a strong and representative Commission to inquire into the question. The Government endorsed the opinion expressed by Lord Salisbury in another place that the time had arrived when there should be a careful

inquiry into this and other branches of Poor Law administration; but they did not propose any alteration in the principles of the Poor Law. The present Bill dealt with what was purely a question of machinery, and it related quite as much to other local authorities as to boards of guardians. The evils of the plural vote applied to all of them. The Bill, then, proposed to put into law two or three great principles, and a general assent had been given to those principles. The first was to abolish *ex-officio* guardians, and against this object of the Bill no hon. member had spoken. The next was to abolish the system of plural or multiple voting, which was admitted to be indefensible. (Hear, hear.) Then there was the principle of the ballot, which, if good in elections of members of Parliament and members of county councils, must be good in the election of boards of guardians. (Hear, hear.) The opponents of the Bill had stated that they would reserve their criticism until its details were before them. He took the same position. The Government would, therefore, support the second reading of the Bill, reserving full and absolute right of criticism in regard to its details when in Committee. At the same time, they had no wish to disguise from the House that they themselves intended to submit a measure dealing with local government, affecting local boards, boards of guardians, and other local authorities, and possibly some of the provisions contained in the present Bill might be found in it. It would strengthen the hands and pave the way of the Government if the House declared its approval of the three main principles in the Bill now before it. (Hear, hear.) The principles of the Poor Law were one thing, and their administration another. They had not found that any institutions of the country, from the Parliament downwards, had been in any way impaired by the infusion into their administration of a popular element, popular responsibility, and popular sympathy, and they did not shrink from applying those principles to the Poor Law. He hoped that by the inquiries which the Government were prepared to institute they would be hereafter in a position to submit to the House measures which would not be a reversal, but a development, of the great principles which were laid down in 1834, and that the Poor Law of this country, remaining intact in its great and solid principles, would yet be adapted in many of its details to the changed circumstances of the times, and thus would be infused into it a broader and more liberal spirit. The policy of the Government on this matter was a policy of inquiry, and he believed that from the Commission which they had appointed, representing all shades of thought and opinion, would emanate a report which would be of enormous value to those on whom responsibility would hereafter devolve in directing our Poor Law administration. He hoped the House would not be put to the trouble of dividing, for there was almost a universal consensus of opinion in favour of the Bill. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BALFOUR said he rose simply to say that, while he assented to the second reading of the Bill, he retained the fullest liberty to deal with all the questions that came within its purview if it reached a further stage. The right hon. gentleman had drawn a distinction which he could scarcely follow between the principles and the administration of the Poor Law. If his Bill was likely to impair the administration of the Poor Law, it was very small consolation to hear that its principles would remain unimpaired. (Hear, hear.) In assenting to the second reading he was merely agree-

ing to the general proposition that some Poor Law reform was not only desirable, but perhaps necessary. Whilst he held that no responsible Minister should ever meddle with the Poor Law except after very careful thought and inquiry, he was of opinion that no one ought to commit himself to the proposition that this Act, passed 60 years ago, was an inviolable statute which ought under no circumstances to be reviewed.

The Bill was read a second time.

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES (No. 2) BILL.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that its object was to strengthen the bands of the Board of Trade and to enable that department to deal with disputes that might arise from time to time between the railway companies and the traders and agriculturists of the country. In the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888 there was a clause providing that "the Board, if they think that there is reasonable ground for a complaint, may thereupon call upon the railway company for an explanation and endeavour to settle amicably the difference between the complainants and the company." By his Bill it was proposed to enact that "when any complaint shall have been made to the Board of Trade that a railway or canal company is charging the complainant an unreasonable toll, rate, or charge, the Board shall inquire into such complaint and determine what is a reasonable toll, rate, or charge, and shall give notice of their decision to the company, and thereupon any sum charged by the company in excess of the toll, rate, or charge found to be reasonable shall be taken to be an illegal charge." The importance of the subject of railway rates had been made clear that day by the large and influential deputation that had waited upon the President of the Board of Trade. His belief was that, when once it was known by the railway companies that the Board of Trade could settle disputes between them and traders, they would be anxious themselves to make fair and reasonable settlements. Traders and agriculturists wish to have a Government department acting as umpire between them and the railway companies. The decisions of the Board ought to be final and the procedure cheap and simple.

MR. MUNDELLA had not thought this Bill would be reached that afternoon and he had not been able to secure a copy of it. He was therefore not in a position to assent to it. But he had expressed elsewhere his sympathy with those traders who were suffering from the excessive charges exacted by the railway companies since the 1st of January. He trusted that the House would be sufficiently patient to give the companies time to change their policy—say until Easter. If by that time they had not made such a reasonable settlement with the traders as the latter had a right to expect, he should himself introduce a Bill effectually dealing with the whole question. (Hear, hear.)

MR. HUNTER observed that he had heard the reply of the President of the Board of Trade to the deputation and he feared that the right hon. gentleman did not fully grasp the situation. What it was desirable to realize was that the principle of the *maximum* rate far from acting as a curb upon the unreasonableness of the companies, was a shield behind which they were able to shelter themselves in their differences with the traders. The object of the Bill before the House was to bring the railway companies back to the principle of the common law, which was that they could only make reasonable charges. He thought

something more ought to be done than was proposed by the President of the Board of Trade.

SIR J. WHITEHEAD said that after the explanation of the right hon. gentleman he thought he ought to withdraw the Bill.

The order for the second reading was discharged and the Bill withdrawn.

LABOUR MINISTER BILL.

MR. J. E. SPENCER moved the second reading of this Bill.

SIR C. DILKE was criticizing the Bill, and pointing out what a sham remedy it provided for an alleged evil, when half-past 5 arrived, and by the rules of the House the debate stood adjourned.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was read a second time.

POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SIR A. ROLLIT moved the second reading of this Bill.

MR. ASQUITH did not object to the Bill, because he thought it would bring about a considerable improvement in the law. In Committee, however, there were several amendments which he should urge ought to be inserted.

The Bill was read a second time.

TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUNDS BILL.

MR. HOWELL moved the second reading of this Bill, the object of which was to exempt from income-tax the invested funds of trade unions applied in the payment of provident benefits.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER objected.

THE CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said the Government did not object to the Bill, because it had been examined by the authorities of the Inland Revenue and met with their approval.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH asked whether the Bill would apply to the funds of small provident societies.

THE CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER could not give an opinion as to other associations without a Bill on the subject being carefully examined by the Inland Revenue authorities.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH thought that it would be invidious to deal with one class of societies only.

MR. MUNDELLA also urged that opposition to the Bill should be withdrawn.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH.—I object. (Cries of "Shame.")

The Bill could not be further proceeded with at this stage.

NEW LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

Progress was immediately reported.

NEW BILLS.

Leave to introduce the following Bills was obtained:—
MR. BOORD,—Bill to amend the Volunteer Act, 1863.

MR. REID,—Bill to amend the law relating to casualties in Scotland.

The Bills were brought up and read a first time.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes to 6 o'clock.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS.

The Chipstead Valley Railway Bill was read a second time.

The order for the first reading of the London Owners' Improvement Rate or Charge Bill was discharged, and the Bill withdrawn.

The second reading of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill was postponed until February 24.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (VOTING AND QUALIFICATION) BILL.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH gave notice that on the motion to go into committee on this Bill he should move:—"That it be an instruction to the committee that they have power to amend the law dealing with the assessment and collection of rates on small tenants." (Cheers.)

WAR OFFICE CONTRACTS.

MR. ALLEN asked the Secretary of State for War whether the War Office insisted that in a recent contract for bottles the contractor should pay the full trade union rate of wages to the workmen employed; and whether the contract was given to an English merchant who supplied foreign bottles: and, if so, whether it was insisted that the foreign manufacturer should pay the same rate of wages as the English manufacturer for the same work.

MR. WOODALL.—The recent contract for bottles contained the usual provision that the wages paid in executing it should be those generally accepted as current for competent workmen of the trade required in the district where the work was carried out; the contract was given to an English firm, but we are unable to obtain evidence as to where the bottles were actually made; there is no power to insist that foreign rates of wages should be assimilated to home rates.

SCOTTISH SALMON FISHINGS.

SIR H. MAXWELL asked the Secretary for Scotland whether it was intended to give any effect to the recommendations of the Committee on Crown Rights in Scottish Salmon Fishings, which reported in 1890, or to those of the Committee on White Fishery of the Solway, which reported in 1892.

SIR G. TREVELYAN.—Last week, in reply to the hon. member for Argyleshire, I stated the steps which the Government had taken to carry out some recommendations of the Committee on Crown Rights in Scottish Salmon Fishings on which the hon. baronet did such excellent service. With regard to the Solway Firth, the most important recommendations of the committee would require legislation of a character which is engaging my consideration.

In answer to MR. BUCHANAN,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said.—The Scotchman may not catch a salmon swimming within three miles of the coast of Scotland, and the Englishman may catch a salmon within three miles of the coast of England; the disability imposed on Scotchmen should certainly be removed at the earliest opportunity. (Hear, hear.)

CYPRUS.

In answer to ADMIRAL FIELD,

MR. BUXTON said.—The suggestions made by the Comptroller and Auditor-General as to the administration of Cyprus have been carefully considered, and some steps have been taken upon them, as will be seen from papers which, I believe, will be laid before the House in connexion with the appropriation accounts. As regards the taxation of land, the whole subject has been elaborately inquired into by a local commission and the Executive Council, and is now being considered by the Secretary of State; and it can only be said at present that the points mentioned by Sir C. Ryan will receive full attention. It is not anticipated that a grant in aid will be required for Cyprus this year, and her Majesty's Government would not therefore consider it proper to place any sum on the Estimates. But doubtless the hon. gentleman will

be able to raise any question in connexion with the matter that he desires on the Colonial Office Vote in Committee of Supply.

FRAUDULENT ASSIGNMENTS.

MR. WEIR asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention had been called to the disclosures reported in the *Daily Chronicle* of the 10th inst., made in the public examination of a bankrupt of the name of Burgess, who had turned his business when it was a losing concern and in financial straits into a limited company, consisting of himself, his father, his mother, his wife, and his friends, and who, under the cover of that fiction, had evaded the operation of the Bills of Sale Acts, by giving unregistered assignments under the name of debentures over his chattel property to the extent of £40,000 for debts amounting to £9,500; and whether he intended to introduce legislation that should extend the principles of the Bills of Sale Acts to assignments by limited companies.

MR. MUNDELLA.—My attention has been called to this matter, and I am conferring with the Lord Chancellor with a view to taking measures for the prevention of such fraudulent practices.

THE BURMAH GOVERNMENT AND PEARL FISHERIES.

MR. MARTIN asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to the statement in *The Times* of January 16 that the Government of Burmah had claimed and sold the exclusive right of pearl fishery in the Mergui Archipelago, and, if so, in what manner, to what distance from the coast, and under what law; whether any British subjects had been warned off, or compelled to leave those waters; and whether her Majesty's Government intended to exclude foreign fishermen from the waters in question.

MR. G. RUSSELL.—The legal question to which the hon. member draws attention was under the consideration of the Government law officers in India at the end of last month. The correspondence has not yet come home, and the Secretary of State can only say that the questions raised by the Burmah Local Government on the subject have not yet been decided.

THE RAJAH OF MANSIENSINGH.

MR. SCHWANN asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the attention of the Secretary of State for India had been drawn to an article in the February number of *India*, entitled "The Mansiengh Scandal," signed by the Right Hon. Sir Richard Garth, late Chief Justice of Bengal; whether he was aware that the Rajah of Mansiengh, in a memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, formally impugned the *bona fides* of the proceedings taken in this case by the district magistrate, Mr. H. A. D. Phillips, of the Bengal Civil Service; and whether he would direct a public inquiry into all the facts of the case to be made before a competent and independent tribunal.

MR. G. RUSSELL.—The Secretary of State has seen the article referred to. He has not officially received from India any information on the subject. It appears that on December 31 last the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal issued a resolution dealing with the Rajah's memorial and severely censuring Mr. Phillips, although finding that there was no justification for any imputation on his motives in conducting the prosecution. The Secretary of State will, however, call for an official report on the matter.

GROCERS' LICENCES.

MR. D. A. THOMAS asked the Chancellor of the

Exchequer whether he could state the amount of revenue directly derived in each of the last five financial years from the issue of what were commonly called "grocers' licences"; and whether, in view of the strong feeling throughout the country among temperance reformers and others against these licences, he would consider the advisability of abolishing them.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—Grocers' licences properly so called are levied only in Scotland and Ireland. The average amount derived from them in those countries during the last five years has been £43,000. In England the licences to grocers are not distinguished from other licences for the retail of beer, spirits, and wines issued to retailers who are not publicans. They are, however, all generally called grocers' licences. The receipts from those licences for the five years in question were—in 1887-8 £110,947, in 1888-9 £113,554, in 1889-90 £117,155, in 1890-1 £121,135, and in 1891-2 £123,685. The statement of what I intend to do with regard to these licences will, I think, be more properly made when I introduce the Bill for the appropriation of the Excise revenues. (Hear, hear.)

RAILWAY RATES.

MR. LOUGH asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he was aware that the railway rates throughout the kingdom were advanced in the vast majority of cases on January 1 this year, although the railway companies undertook before legislation was sanctioned that no such advances should take place; and whether, in the interests of the industries whose very existence in many cases was threatened by these advances, he was willing to intimate to the various companies that the rates charged during 1892 should in all cases be restored where these were under the present rates, and that the amounts levied in excess of the rates of 1892 should be refunded pending further negotiations.

MR. MUNDELLA.—I have not sufficient information before me to be able to say what is the proportion between the rates which are raised and the rates which were reduced from January 1 of this year, but I have sufficient evidence to convince me that the rates which the companies proposed to bring into force on January 1 are in many instances so much advanced as seriously to threaten some of the industries of this country. I am daily in communication with the Railway Association on the subject, and I earnestly hope that they will see their way to making such reductions as will satisfy the reasonable requirements of the traders, and that after revision the extra charges levied since January 1 will be refunded. (Hear.)

MR. DIGBY asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the London and South-Western Railway Company had not only now abandoned their increased rates for the carriage of milk, but had also agreed not to charge them at all since January 1 last.

MR. MUNDELLA.—In a letter dated January 30, 1893, Mr. Scotter, general manager of the London and South-Western Railway stated:—"I take this opportunity to inform you that, so far as the South-Western Company are concerned, they have for the present decided to charge the old rates for the carriage of milk, and will apply the same as from January 1." (Hear, hear.)

WOMEN IN INDIAN MINES.

In answer to **SIR J. GOREST**,

MR. G. RUSSELL said,—The employment of women in underground mines in British India is still lawful, but the numbers of women so employed are not known

in this country. The Secretary of State has intimated to the Government of India that he concurs in the opinion of his predecessor that it was most desirable that the employment of women and girls underground should be prohibited in India in accordance with the decision of the Berlin Conference. (Hear, hear.)

ALLEGED ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF SALMON.

In answer to **MR. T. SHAW**,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—My attention has been called to the case of Bertram and George Tyson. (The offence was that of being in possession of salmon caught during close time and for fishing other than by rod and line.) By the terms of the Act the proof that the fish were not taken contrary to its provisions lay upon the accused, and, judging from the report of the proceedings which I have seen, I think the statement made in the second paragraph of the question is well founded. The many anomalies of the Tweed Acts, of which the present case furnishes one illustration, will receive the earliest attention which the Government can give them, and there is no reason whatever in the view of the Government why the Tweed laws should be at all different from the general law on the subject. I may mention further that Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1886 had a Bill in preparation for the repeal of those provisions of the Tweed Acts to some of which the question refers. (Hear, hear.)

FARMING THE CROWN LANDS.

MR. HANEURY asked the Secretary to the Treasury why the Commissioners of Woods and Forests had failed to supply information to the Auditor-General to enable him to report to Parliament the net financial result of farming the Crown lands in hand, as desired by the Committee of Public Accounts and the Treasury; and whether he would call for such information and lay it upon the table.

SIR J. HIBBERT.—The Commissioners of Woods have represented to the Treasury that in their opinion there are strong reasons against the publication in any form of the information asked for by the Comptroller and Auditor-General; and, in view of this opinion, the force of which the Treasury are prepared to admit, they think that, before any further action is taken in the matter, it will be best that the Commissioners should have an opportunity of explaining their views to the Public Accounts Committee, when the Commissioners' accounts and the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon are under the consideration of the committee. (Hear, hear.)

SOLDIERS' OLD CLOTHING.

MR. H. WRIGHT asked the Secretary for War when it was intended to give the soldier his old clothing and to alter the present regulations laid down for the issues of clothing, as recommended by Lord Wantage's Committee and promised by her Majesty's late Government.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—When I introduce the estimates for the Army I shall make a statement of the intentions of her Majesty's Government with reference to the recommendations of Lord Wantage's Committee, which embrace the question of clothing. (Hear, hear.)

THE NOTTINGHAM POSTMEN.

MR. H. WRIGHT asked the Postmaster-General whether it was the fact that the Nottingham postmen had to go on duty three or four times daily in order to complete a day's work, thereby greatly curtailing the time they could spend at their homes; and, if so, whether it would be possible so to alter the system

that no postman should have to go on duty more than twice in each day.

Mr. A. MORLEY.—It would be impracticable to arrange the duties of postmen at Nottingham or elsewhere so as to give two daily attendances only to each man without great waste of public money. At Nottingham, as elsewhere, the postmen performing the more important duties are required, as a rule, to give three attendances in the day. The postmen performing minor duties, such as collections (usually the younger postmen), have to give four attendances, and it is not considered necessary to make any change. The attendances of all the postmen have recently been brought within a period of about 12 hours out of the 24. (Hear, hear.)

ALLEGED ILLEGAL SEIZURES BY IRISH SHERIFFS.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he had made any progress in the preparation of the return concerning alleged illegal seizures by Irish sheriffs, and when the result would be communicated to the House.

Mr. J. MORLEY.—I understand that the figures relating to seizures or attempted seizures by night under civil bill decrees were obtained by a reference to the police diaries, patrol-books, and other official records. It appears, however, that in some cases writs of the Superior Courts were included, and in other instances cases where the protection by night was requisitioned for without reference to the hours at which the seizures were to be actually effected. The figures I gave the other night, therefore, prove to be over-statements, and I can only express my regret that I was led to make that over-statement. (Cheers and counter-cheers.) The broad fact, however, I am informed remains that, during the period named by me, civil bill decrees were executed or attempted to be executed by sheriffs' bailiffs or special bailiffs between sunset and sunrise, and that police protection was afforded for that purpose. I cannot undertake to lay a return upon the table which might be used for proceedings outside this House. But I have directed a detailed statement of cases from each county named to be prepared. On its receipt I shall be happy to communicate with the hon. member with a view to his inspecting the statement, for the satisfaction of himself and of other hon. members, should he so desire. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CARSON asked whether the right hon. gentleman could name any one case in which this illegal seizure took place. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. J. MORLEY.—I have not got the figures at hand, but there are, I believe, a number of cases in the office which are open to the inspection of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. DANE asked what were the other sources from which the right hon. gentleman obtained his information.

Mr. J. MORLEY was understood to say that he had obtained his information from police diaries, Blue-books, and other documents.

Mr. DANE wished to ask the right hon. gentleman from whom he obtained his information. (Cries of "Oh.")

No answer was given to the question.

DISCHARGES FROM WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

Mr. LOUGH asked the Secretary of State for War whether suspensions and dismissals of workmen were still going on in the Field Gun Section at Woolwich Arsenal; and, if so, why such should be necessary.

Mr. WOODALL, who replied, said,—Men have been

suspended in turns in batches to the number of about 60 in all during the last three months, and 16 have been discharged. This is in consequence of the scarcity of work in the department referred to.

SCOTCH SALMON FISHERIES.

In answer to Dr. MAC GREGOR,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—I have informed the House what steps the Scotch Office has taken in order to represent to the Treasury the urgent importance of stopping further alienation of Crown rights to individuals. That is all that can be done without legislation.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING IN IRELAND.

In answer to Mr. FIELD,

SIR J. HIBBERT said,—The bulk of the general printing for the Intermediate Education Board is, I am informed, done under a contract, given after competition in the year 1890, and since extended, with a firm other than that of the Queen's printers. I have no information as to the staff employed by either firm, or of the matters contained in the second and third paragraphs of the question. As I stated last Thursday, steps have already been taken to secure compliance with the terms of the resolution of the House of Commons on the 13th of February, 1891, and I have seen no evidence that they have been infringed.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING.

Mr. A. C. MORTON asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether a copy of the contract for Parliamentary reporting would be laid upon the table and distributed.

SIR J. HIBBERT.—Yes, Sir.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHURCH IN WALES.

Mr. WHITMORE asked the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent, as a Church Estates Commissioner, whether, at a meeting of the Estates Committee of the Ecclesiastical Commission on the 9th inst., he stated that he was authorized on behalf of her Majesty's Government to deprecate, in view of contemplated legislation, the assignment of any new districts within the Welsh dioceses; and, if so, by whom, and in what form, the authority to make this statement was given to him.

Mr. LEIGHTON further asked whether the hon. gentleman still adhered to that statement; and, if so, whether there was any precedent for the Government interfering with the statutory powers of an independent commission in reference to a Bill which had not been introduced into Parliament.

Mr. LEVESON-GOWER said,—Mr. Speaker,—Perhaps I may be allowed at the same time to answer question No. 60, addressed to me by the hon. member for the Oswestry division of Shropshire. In reply to my hon. friend, I beg to say that before taking the action which is referred to I consulted my right hon. friend the Home Secretary, who is the only other member of the Government taking any part in the work of the Ecclesiastical Commission, and obtained his concurrence. Although I am free to admit that I may have been mistaken in supposing that concurrence to carry with it any further sanction than in so far as relates to my action as a member of the Government who was also an Ecclesiastical Commissioner, I may perhaps take this opportunity of explaining, as some misunderstanding seems to have arisen upon the subject, that the Government has no power and has had no intention to control or interfere in any way with the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and that in taking the action which I did upon the 9th inst. I was merely stating the

course which, in our character of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, my right hon. friend and I would hereafter follow.

Mr. S. EVANS inquired whether it was not a fact that between the years 1883 and 1889 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners suspended their action in Welsh districts in view of the possible introduction of legislation.

Mr. LEVESON-GOWER replied that he was not at that time responsible for the action of the Commissioners.

Mr. PAUL.—Is it not the duty of those members of the Government who are also members of the Ecclesiastical Commission to act as a medium of communication between the Commissioners and the Government; and, if not, what are they there for?

Mr. LEVESON-GOWER.—It is; and that is the course we intend to pursue.

Mr. GOSCHEN.—Were not the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the impression that this was not more or less a communication from the Government, and intended to be so?

Mr. LEVESON-GOWER.—If that be so I desire to express my regret that I made an error in regard to that matter.

Mr. H. ROBERTS asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been drawn to the fact that a scheme had been drawn up by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to provide for a new ecclesiastical district at Colwyn Bay, which set forth the particular expediency of such division, and how far this might be done without injury to the parties interested. Whether the Privy Council had power to refuse to ratify such a scheme, if it appeared that the circumstances of the case did not call for its application; and whether he could state what, under present circumstances, would be the attitude of the Government towards such proposals creating new ecclesiastical vested interests in Wales and Monmouthshire.

Mr. ASQUITH.—My attention has been called to this matter. I understand that in the ordinary course the only question considered by the Privy Council is whether the scheme is within the legal powers of the Commissioners, and, if so, it is passed. Until the law is altered, as it would be by the passing of the Suspensory Bill, the Government have no authority or power to control the action of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in respect to the creation or augmentation of ecclesiastical interests in Wales, otherwise than by the votes of those members of the Government who are Ecclesiastical Commissioners and entitled to sit thereon.

CAVALRY MOUNTS.

Mr. BROOKFIELD asked the Secretary of State for War whether, in reckoning three men to every two horses in cavalry regiments serving at home, he could state the average proportion of trained horses ridden by recruits, and of young horses being trained by old soldiers.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—The hon. member will realize the extreme difficulty of fixing such proportions, which must to some extent depend upon individual opinions; but, broadly speaking, in a cavalry regiment serving at home about one trained horse in four is ridden by a recruit, and about one horse in 11 is a young horse in course of training.

THE GOVERNORSHIP OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

Mr. HANBURY asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the statement in a reported speech of Sir G. Dibbs, Prime Minister of New South

Wales, was correct—namely, that no new Governor was to be appointed without the previous sanction of the Colonial Ministry; whether this had hitherto been the practice in the appointment of colonial Governors; and whether the case of New South Wales was exceptional, or was the same practice to be extended to all the self-governing colonies.

Mr. BUXTON said.—I feel sure there must be some misapprehension in regard to the matter, as the statement in the telegram referred to is not correct. No change has been made, or is contemplated, in the practice (which will be found detailed in Parliamentary Paper C 5,828) pursued by former Governments in regard to the appointment of colonial Governors. At the same time, the Secretary of State will always endeavour to secure that the Governor and the Government of the colony should be informed, as a matter of courtesy, of the selection approved by the Queen before any announcement on the subject is made in the Press.

THE CONDITION OF THE NAVY.

Mr. HANBURY asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether it was the fact that the six battleships at Malta, when assistance had suddenly to be sent to Zante, were none of them in a condition to be sent to sea, and the arrival of the Camperdown had to be awaited before such assistance could be sent; and, if so, what were the causes for this condition of the Mediterranean Squadron.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH said.—No, Sir. The facts are these:—The Camperdown was approaching Malta when Sir George Tryon heard, on February 1, the first rumour of the disaster in the island of Zante. Shortly afterwards, at 5 o'clock p.m., he received the first request for assistance. Less than eight hours later, after having been coaled and receiving tents, blankets, deals, and other stores, the Camperdown sailed. No other ship could have been despatched with this very satisfactory promptitude, though other ships could have been sent on this service had the Camperdown not been available. Certain ships are undergoing the usual examination and repair at Malta. The tents, stores, and provisions proved most acceptable to the people of Zante.

IRELAND'S REVENUE UNDER HOME RULE.

Mr. GOSCHEN asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he could state, in round figures, how the amount of £5,660,000, described by the Prime Minister as the amount which under the arrangements of the Government of Ireland Bill would accrue as revenue to Ireland, was arrived at.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER was understood to say that the amount was arrived at as follows:—Excise, £3,220,000; local taxation (stamps, £755,000; income-tax, £550,000; Excise licences, £190,000), £1,495,000; Postal revenue, £740,000; Crown lands, £65,000; miscellaneous revenue, £140,000—total, £5,660,000. The amount was arrived at on the same basis as adopted by the right hon. gentleman himself; but the figures were estimated upon the revenue for 1892-3, which could now be pretty accurately gauged.

Mr. SEXTON inquired whether the right hon. gentleman would lay on the table of the House a return showing the distinction between gross and net revenue, especially with regard to Excise, and also with regard to the items connected with civil Government; or whether he should formally move for such a return.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER.—If the

hon. gentleman will communicate with me I will see which is the more convenient.

EARTHENWARE MEASURES.

In answer to Mr. WILLIAM ALLEN,

Mr. MUNDELLA said,—I am aware that certain inspectors of weights and measures (who are appointed by local authorities, and not by the Board of Trade) have refused to recognize the legality of the Staffordshire stamp on earthenware measures, and I have called the attention of the authorities who appoint these inspectors to the provisions of the existing law, which permit the use in any part of the United Kingdom of any weight or measure duly stamped by any inspector.

NATIONAL LEPROSY FUND.

In answer to Mr. CAINE,

Mr. G. RUSSELL said,—The Secretary of State understands that the committee of the National Leprosy Fund will publish the report of their commission as early as they can this spring.

TRIAL BY JURY IN BENGAL.

Mr. SCHWANN asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether a commission had been or would be appointed to inquire into the step taken by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, with the consent of the Viceroy of India, acting under the advice of his Council, to abolish the right of trial by jury in eight districts of the Bengal Presidency, in many classes of cases which were previously subject to that mode of trial; what measures would be taken by the Secretary of State for India, should such a commission not have been decided upon, to preserve to all the inhabitants of Bengal the right, which they have hitherto enjoyed, of trial by jury of their fellow-subjects; and would such right be maintained for all inhabitants of British India?

Mr. G. RUSSELL said,—A commission will be appointed by the Government of India to inquire into the matter and report without delay.

INFLAMMABLE GAS EXPLOSION.

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he would be represented by counsel or by an inspector at the inquests on the deaths of two youths killed by an explosion of inflammable gas, caused by a fall of roof which took place on the 11th inst., at the Whitwick Colliery in Leicestershire; and, if not, whether, having regard to the importance of limiting in area and destructiveness the consequences of such explosions, he would cause special attention to be given to ascertaining any local causes which happily prevented this explosion from leading to results yet more extensive and disastrous.

Mr. ASQUITH.—I am in communication with the inspector, who has sent me the following telegram:—

“ I inspected the mine and attended inquest last Monday. Miners' agent and solicitor present. Mine not at work at time of explosion. Two boys killed. Gas liberated by fall of roof. Effects limited in proportion to the quantity of gas which appears to have been ignited. Mine very free from gas and worked with naked lights. Verdict accidental death. Jury refused to recommend use of safety lamps.”

ARTILLERY MILITIA.

In answer to Mr. V. GIBBS,

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said,—Five commissions half-yearly in the Royal Artillery were promised in 1889 to officers of the Artillery Militia. With the exception of one half-year, when only three candidates qualified, five commissions have been given in each half-year. Of the five who last passed two have

received commissions, and three are awaiting the Gazette. Up to this time, therefore, the promise made has been amply fulfilled. In December, 1891, it was, however, publicly notified that this mode of entrance to the Royal Artillery would cease after the examination in March, 1893; but on reconsideration it has been determined to continue it to the extent of four commissions yearly. There are not at present vacancies for more.

COUNTY MAGISTRATES.

Mr. CONYBEARE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the present Lord Chancellor had in any case exercised his power of appointing county magistrates where a lord lieutenant had refused; whether, in cases where the names of duly qualified persons had been forwarded to him, he would submit them for appointment to the lords lieutenant, and, if they refused to appoint them, exercise his right to do so without further reference to the lords lieutenant.

Mr. ASQUITH.—The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. As to the second part, the Lord Chancellor informs me that it would be impossible, within the limits of an answer, to state hypothetically all the points which would arise for consideration in the case supposed, and the manner in which, if they arose, the Lord Chancellor would deal with them. The Lord Chancellor hopes soon to be in a position to make a full statement on the subject.

INCENDIARISM IN IRELAND.

Mr. MACARTNEY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he was aware that on the night of January 30 last a quantity of hay and straw, valued at £100, the property of Moses Benizer, of Kilbreedy, Kildimo, county Limerick, was maliciously burnt; that on the following day a load of straw which he had bought to replace some of the burnt stuff was also set on fire and consumed; and that on February 2 a cowhouse, his property, was maliciously burnt down; and whether, in view of the fact that Mr. Benizer was awarded compensation by the grand jury on several previous occasions for malicious injuries, any steps had been taken to afford him protection.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY asked whether the servant of Mr. Benizer had not been committed for trial on the charge of having caused the fire.

Mr. J. MORLEY.—What my hon. and learned friend has stated is perfectly true. A servant girl has been arrested and returned by the magistrates for trial. The facts stated in the first paragraph are substantially correct, and the result of the action taken by the police to afford protection to Mr. Benizer (not Benizer) and his property has been that a servant girl in his employment has been arrested and returned by the magistrates for trial to the spring assizes, charged with the crime of maliciously setting fire to his premises.

JUDICIAL RENTS IN IRELAND.

Mr. W. REDMOND asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that members representing all sections in Ireland were agreed upon the necessity for the revision of judicial rents in Ireland, the Government would introduce or give their support to such a measure this year.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I think that any strong, general agreement among the representatives of the different sections of opinion in Ireland on the question of the judicial rents would be a very serious fact, and in any case might be submitted to the Government, but so far as my knowledge goes, there is no such general agreement among Irish members on this subject.

Mr. W. REDMOND asked whether it was not the fact that such agreement had often been shown by the expressions in the House of members representing both sections of the Nationalist party, and also of representatives of the Conservative party in Ireland.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—It is very difficult for me to collect and appreciate accurately the opinion to which the hon. member refers, and the terms in which I previously answered him were correct.

Mr. DANE inquired whether the right hon. gentleman had communicated on this subject with the Irish Land Commission.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I have had no communication with the Land Commissioners on the subject.

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL MEAT.

MAJOR RASCH asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government would give facilities to a short Bill having for its object the compulsory labelling of foreign and colonial meat.

Mr. GLADSTONE said the object of marking foreign goods was to prevent imposition, but the question of trying how far the system was applicable to foreign meat had not as yet been very thoroughly examined. He had understood that it was reserved for inquiries which had not yet taken place. The Government would be glad to give facilities for such inquiries.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. R. WALLACE asked the First Lord of the Treasury if he could now say whether the Government intended by legislation, Budget arrangements, or otherwise to give practical effect to the principle of the payment of members of Parliament.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I expected a communication on this subject from gentlemen who had been authorized, and, I believe, deputed, by a meeting held outside by a large number of members of Parliament sitting on this side of the House. I had the honour of receiving these gentlemen yesterday, and I am now expecting a further communication from them. Until I receive that communication I am not in a position to answer any question on the subject.

MILITARY DEPOTS IN SCOTLAND.

In answer to Mr. HOZIER,

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said,—There are no adequate barracks at Lanark for a dépôt, and for many reasons there are advantages in having the double dépôt at Hamilton, where it is expected that certain inconveniences in the accommodation will be speedily overcome.

A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

THE TIMES AND THE IRISH MEMBERS.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE.—I beg to ask the noble lord the member for West Edinburgh a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether he is correctly reported as having said at a banquet on Tuesday last that “they knew well from the internal difficulties of the Irish party that they (the Irish members) would no longer be paid by Irish money. Therefore they were being paid, undoubtedly being paid, by the party organization and the party now in power.” (“Oh, oh.”) “Therefore the position Mr. Gladstone was in was that he was undertaking this constitutional change, relying on a majority of forty paid mercenaries.” (Loud Nationalist cries of “Oh, oh.”) I would ask the noble lord if he is correctly reported as having stated this, and, if so, whether he will kindly state the reason on which the assertion is based. (Cheers.)

VISCOUNT WOLMER.—In reply to the hon. baronet,

Privilege—“The Times” and the Irish Members.

I have to say that the report from which he has quoted is substantially accurate. (Hear, hear.) As the hon. gentleman will see, if he examines the words I used, I carefully abstained from expressing anything in the nature of either blame or criticism (loud cries of “Oh,” and cheers) on the party to which he belongs. (Cries of “Oh.”) If my word is doubted, I can only quote the words I really used. These are the words with which I prefaced my remarks:—

“It has been a matter of public knowledge that for the last ten years a large proportion of the Irish members could not attend at Westminster unless they received a salary. I do not think that is any reflection on the Irish members. They receive a salary for purposes which their constituents approve, and for doing work which their constituents approve of, and for doing work which their constituents expect them to do.”

He asks me on what ground I made the assertion to which he refers, and which is contained in the words he quoted. They are as follows:—It is generally admitted that money is no longer forthcoming from Irish or American sources, and the inference that seems, therefore, to be irresistible is that it is derived from English sources. (Laughter and cheers.) I am quite ready to admit that I went too far in stating that it undoubtedly came from the Gladstonian party funds, but I certainly thought myself justified in believing that it came either from those funds or from funds devoted generally to the furtherance of the interests of the English Home Rule party. But if the hon. member is in a position to say that that statement (cries of “Oh, oh,” and cheers) has no foundation in fact, I need not say that I am prepared to withdraw it and to express my regret. (Cheers.) Let me repeat that I intended to reflect nothing upon those who are supposed to receive the money, but simply to point out the very peculiar Parliamentary position now occupied by the Government. (Cheers and laughter, and cries of “Apologize.”)

Mr. SEXTON, rising amid cheers, said,—I call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that the statement of the noble lord was that the Irish members “were being paid, undoubtedly being paid,” by the party organization and the party now in power. The noble lord has put in circulation what is an absolute falsehood (cheers), a total and absolute falsehood, a mere invention, and I think the House is entitled to know, in the first place, from the noble lord whether he invented the statement himself (cheers and laughter), or whether he adopted it at the instance of any other person, and, if so, at whose instance, and on what grounds. (Cheers.) Now, Sir, I would ask you, having regard to the gross and scandalous character of the allegation (cheers), whether the noble lord or any other member of the House is entitled either to invent or to adopt such statements imputing to a body of members of this House that they hold a relation to the Government of this country incompatible with the independent discharge of their duties, and whether, on being brought to task in this House, the noble lord is entitled to make a subjunctive or contingent apology, and, having wantonly set afloat a falsehood, whether he is entitled to call for a contradiction (cheers), or whether, being himself destitute of any grounds by which to justify his statement, his apology should not be instant and absolute. (Loud cheers.)

The SPEAKER.—The words made use of were not made in this House, and, therefore, my jurisdiction does not come directly in. The House is very chary of noticing expressions used out of the House and

Viscount Wolmer.

bringing them up for discussion in this House. The hon. baronet asked me if the purport of what he has said might be embodied in a question, and in accordance with the invariable rule I told him not, but, as it was a personal question and involved a *quasi* kind of privilege, he was entitled to ask for a personal explanation. The allegation has been made and somewhat modified by the noble lord, and has been repudiated and altogether discountenanced by hon. gentlemen from Ireland. I think, therefore, so far as I am concerned, the matter should rest there. I cannot call upon any hon. member to apologize for anything he has said out of the House. There is only one expression which I should wish had not been used either in this House or out of it, and that is the word "mercenary." (Ministerial cheers.)

VISCOUNT WOLMER.—Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to admit that that word was an unfortunate and wrong word to use—(laughter, and cries of "Disgraceful")—unfortunate, because, as I have said, my intention was to reflect upon the Government and not upon the Irish members, and the use of that word might be fairly open to the criticism that it also reflected on the Irish members. Therefore, I frankly express my regret for having used that word. As regards what I said before, I have nothing to add to. (Cries of "Oh" and "Withdraw.") If a contradiction is made I withdraw it absolutely. (Cheers.)

AN IRISH MEMBER.—It has been made. (Cheers.)

MR. SEXTON.—The noble lord having now in a most niggardly and ungracious manner (cheers), but yet in a manner the sense of which is complete, given his explanation, it entitles me to submit to the House that he made a false statement. (Cries of "Oh.") I might call it by a shorter name if I liked. (Cheers and cries of "A Salisbury.") The House is now seised of the fact. (Cries of "Order.") I am not out of order. We mean to have this out. (Cheers.) I say that, as the House is now seised of the fact that a wanton calumny against a body of members has been set afloat, I must call the instant attention of yourself and the House to the use which has been made of that calumny in *The Times* to-day. (Cheers.) In the course of an article on the payment of members, *The Times*, amidst a number of other offensive and calumnious statements (cheers), indulges in the following, acting upon the evidence of a witness, the value of whose evidence the House is able to estimate:—"Lord Wolmer, whose position as Liberal Unionist Whip has given him peculiar opportunities of becoming acquainted with the facts of the Parliamentary situation," made the statements, which are contained in the speech of the noble lord. And then *The Times* goes on to say:—"It is notorious that since the Parnellite split there has been no American money forthcoming for the subsistence of these stipendiary patriots." (Loud Opposition cheers.) This (pointing to the Conservative benches) is "the party of gentlemen." (Cheers and cries of "Cowards.") There is not a peasant in Ireland who would be ashamed of your conduct. "And," *The Times* proceeds, "as these must live somehow, they are, so Lord Wolmer declared, 'undoubtedly being paid by the party organization and by the party now in power.' . . . We have no difficulty in accepting Lord Wolmer's assurance" (Nationalist cries of "Pigott") "that one-half at least of the party to whom Mr. Gladstone proudly points as speaking in the name of Ireland are in receipt of a stipend, drawn either from an English party fund or from the private liberality of rich English partisans." Now, Mr. Speaker, I submit

that, since the foundation of this House of Commons many centuries back, it has never been held tolerable that any one, either a member of this House, or an editor, or any other person in this country, should be allowed to impute, even to one member of this House, that, even in regard to any solitary act in the discharge of his functions, the discharge of his duty had been connected with the receipt of money. Now, Sir, the charge made by the principal newspaper in the country against the main body of the representatives of Ireland is that, not with regard to any solitary function, but with regard to the whole discharge of their duty here as representatives of others, they are in the pay of the Government of the country. (Cheers.) It is as false a statement as ever was made. Neither to the Government of this country nor to any rich English partisan has any member of this party ever been indebted for one penny, or ever will be. (Cheers.)

VISCOUNT WOLMER rose at this point, but

MR. SEXTON said,—I have not the least intention of giving way. The noble lord can speak when I have done. I submit to you very respectfully—we are poor men striving to do our duty. Whatever help we may require we should seek from our own countrymen, and certainly if that help should not be sufficient we should never seek it anywhere else. We mean to do our duty here to the end. I submit respectfully that, if writings of this kind in the Press of this country are to be permitted in regard to the representatives of another country who are discharging their duties here, the discharge of these duties will become impossible. (Cheers.) I, therefore, beg to move that the leading article in *The Times* of this date is a gross and scandalous breach of the privileges of this House. (Loud cheers.)

THE SPEAKER.—I hope the matter will not go further. There is no *mala fides* imputed in the words that have been read. Discreet they may be, but there is no *mala fides* imputed to an hon. member of this House in the discharge of his duties in this House, and I cannot say that there is a question of privilege raised. I hope that after the noble lord has withdrawn the word I thought improper, and which if used in this House would be unparliamentary, the matter will be left there. We have now the assurance from at least two hon. members representing constituencies in Ireland that the statement made is totally devoid of foundation. I think the House may rest upon the assurances those hon. gentlemen have given, and in the interests of the House I do implore hon. members not to let the matter go any further. (Opposition cheers.)

MR. SEXTON.—I respectfully ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether *mala fides* is not imputed in the description of a body of members of this House as a body of "paid mercenaries." (Cheers.)

VISCOUNT WOLMER.—I only wish to say for myself that after what the hon. member has said I apologize to the Irish party. (Cheers.)

MR. SEXTON.—I respectfully say that the Editor of *The Times* should apologize at the bar. (Ministerial cheers and cries of "Move.") I respectfully submit that I am within my right, and that the question rests ultimately with the decision of the House whether or not a breach of privilege has been committed, and I respectfully move that the leading article in *The Times* of this morning is a gross and scandalous breach of the privileges of this House. (Ministerial cheers.)

The hon. gentleman then brought up the paper containing the article and gave it to the Clerk at the table, who read the passage which the hon. gentleman

previously quoted, and also the following sentences, from a different part of the same article :—

“ For a century at least the House of Commons has never even been suspected of corruption. Are we prepared to run the risk of losing this priceless advantage for the sake of enabling the Gladstonian party to keep a band of ‘ paid mercenaries ’ in steady attendance at Westminster without depleting the ‘ war chest ’ of the party, which is conscious that, at no distant date, it will have to face another appeal to the constituencies ? ”

Mr. J. REDMOND.—I have great pleasure in seconding the motion. (Cheers.)

Mr. GLADSTONE, who was received with cheers, said,—I am never forward, Sir, in promoting movements in the House for severe notice being taken of what is said of persons or proceedings in this House by persons outside it, but the question has been distinctly raised whether this article is or is not a breach of the privileges of the House. I have first of all to say that I am very glad the noble lord has extricated himself from at least one-half of this charge. (Laughter.) As I understand him, the other portion of it falls upon a Government composed of persons with whom he was once associated. (Hear, hear.) He says his desire was that the brunt—I do not think he used that expression, but he implied it—that the brunt of the great weight and severity of words of that kind coming from him (laughter), the whole of the tremendous weight which attaches to his unfounded assertion, shall fall upon us. (Laughter.) I am not so sensitive—it is perhaps owing to being hardened in these matters—to that charge, but I think the noble lord would have consulted well for his own character (cheers), and into that sacred precinct I shall not trespass. (Laughter.) I shall leave the whole subject contentedly in his hands. So far as this article is concerned—I am aware that your powers of hearing are more acute, happily, than mine—when I heard the extract from the article first read by the hon. gentleman opposite, with a feeling which I think did him honour (cheers)—a gentleman whose pecuniary integrity I may say boldly, in my judgment, requires no more defence or vindication than the pecuniary integrity of any other gentleman in the House (cheers)—when I first heard the extract, I was doubtful whether there reached my ear anything which constituted a gross breach of privilege, because, however offensive the word “ mercenary ” may be, yet after all a mercenary need not necessarily be corrupt. I know not, Sir, what your case may be, but on hearing the article read at the table I do gather from it that it contains a most distinct charge of corruption (loud cheers)—a charge of the reintroduction of corruption into this House, after it has been happily cleared from it during 100 years, through the medium of the Irish members. I was quite unaware, I need not say, that this matter was likely to be brought forward, but unquestionably, if I am asked whether charge of corruption against a body of members of this House constitutes a breach of privilege, I am afraid it is not possible for me to give any answer but one, and that one in the affirmative. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. BALFOUR.—I certainly thought, Sir, that after the observations which you made from the chair, and even in the absence of the observations you made from the chair, it would have been the duty of the

leader of the House to give us some guidance (Ministerial cries of “ Oh ”) in circumstances which all of us must admit to be of some difficulty and delicacy. (Hear, hear.) There are two questions which always arise when the conduct of the Press is brought under the notice of this House. There is, first, the technical question as to whether there has or has not been a breach of the privileges of the House. There is, secondly, the question of policy as to whether it is desirable for the dignity and the order of the House (Ministerial laughter) that we should enter into one of those conflicts with the Press out of which, so far as I know, this House has never come with any augmentation of credit to itself. (Cheers.) On the second of these points we have waited for the guidance of the leader of the House, and we have waited, I regret to say, in vain. (Cries of “ No.”) Let me say one word on the first point—the technical question of whether there has been a breach of privilege or not. Now, Sir, I have personally, from accident with which the House is well acquainted, been brought for many years into the most direct personal collision, so to speak, with gentlemen sitting below the gangway; but I certainly and emphatically express my firm conviction—a conviction from which I have never wavered even in the heat of the hottest controversies—that not a single one of these gentlemen was ever bribed or corrupted for the work which he did in this House, or that he took the part which he thought it his duty to take from any motives other than those which he believed to be for the benefit of his country. (Cheers.) I may say, also, as I have touched upon personal questions, that if we are to be so very sensitive (Ministerial cries of “ Oh ”) about the criticisms of the Press upon the character and honour of our members, I will guarantee to come down to this House with an armful (laughter) of copies of *United Ireland*, every one of which contains imputations against members of this House who were at one time in office, and far more grave than those which the hon. gentleman has extracted from *The Times* article. (Cheers.) But it appears to me that, while any insinuation of corrupt or mercenary motives on the part of members from Ireland is absolutely without foundation, and ought never to have been hinted at or suggested, if anybody will read the article carefully and accurately he will see—I may say I never saw the article or heard of it until I came into the House—that the intention of the writer in *The Times* was this—that if there was, as they assert, a paid party in this House, there was a danger, through that very fact, of the reintroduction of those corruptions which were an unhappy blot on our Parliamentary history. (Ministerial cries of “ Oh.”) That is a mere question of the fair inference of the words. I am not defending—it is not my business to defend or attack—the particular statements made by *The Times*; I have no concern one way or the other with it; but I do ask the House, before they enter into one of these indecorous conflicts with the Press, at all events to be careful they are not putting a construction on the words which the words do not necessarily bear, and to consider whether, if the fight is to go on, they will not find themselves to be ultimately in the wrong. (Cheers.) I put it to the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has had the advantage I have not had—namely, of looking at the paper—I put it to him whether so interpretation, at all events—I do not say the only interpretation—which can be put on *The Times* article is not this—that the result of there being a

paid party in this House might be ultimately, at some time unspecified, to lower the financial integrity of the House and to reintroduce corruption; and whether, if the article is capable of that interpretation, we should not only be unwise, but we should be mad, to enter into one of those contests with the Press of which there have been too many in our Parliamentary history, and to the number of which I do implore the Government not to add. I trust the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will see that the counsel I venture respectfully to give to the House is not given with any party feeling or any party prejudice, but simply with a view to the dignity of our proceedings. (Cheers.)

COLONEL SAUNDERSON.—I wish to ask, on a point of order, whether, if the articles in *The Times* imputing certain motives to hon. members below the gangway are to be read, I should be in order in asking that certain articles and speeches made in Ireland imputing the fact that the hon. member for Waterford and his following have been bribed and paid by the Tory party (Opposition cheers, and cries of "Oh")—should I be in order in moving that they also be read?

THE SPEAKER.—No articles or speeches are before the House except this particular article in *The Times* newspaper. I should say that when I made the observation in reply to the hon. member for North Kerry he had not then mentioned the word "corruption." He mentioned the words "paid mercenaries," and those were the words which I asked the noble lord to withdraw. He has withdrawn them, and the House will hear me out that the hon. member for North Kerry in his speech had not given any indication of a charge of corruption. I must, of course, leave that matter in the hands of the House. (Cheers.)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—The right hon. gentleman opposite appealed to me. I confess that I do not know whether he expected that, after the leader of the House had expressed his opinion that this was a gross breach of the privileges of the House, I should arise and express a different view. (Laughter and cheers.) Well then, Sir, I do not hold any different opinion. My right hon. friend put the matter distinctly, as you, Sir, have pointed out. The whole venom and virus of this matter lie in the imputation of personal corruption to a large number of the members of this House. These are the words:—"For a century at least the House of Commons has never been even suspected of corruption." And then follows this sentence:—"Are we prepared to run the risk of losing this priceless advantage"—that is, the advantage of having the House pure and clear from corruption—"for the sake of enabling the Gladstonian party to keep a band of 'paid mercenaries' in steady attendance at Westminster?" Now, is there any man of ordinary intelligence who can read those sentences in any other signification than that the Irish members are corrupt and are paid for voting in a particular way in this House? (Cheers.) No man of common sense can read this otherwise. (Cheers.) However averse we may be to enter upon a question of this kind—and I am always very averse to do anything of the kind—and I should hope that both sides of the House are so, I hope it will not be regarded as a party question, when we are about to consider the great question of Irish government—whether it shall be introduced to this House by vile calumnies of this character (cheers), discrediting the whole body of men for whom a great number of members of

this House desire and insist that they should remain at Westminster and be our colleagues and our equals here. (Cheers.) Ought we not to begin this discussion, if we are to begin it with any sense of fairness and decency, by repudiating by the unanimous voice of the House such foul, such false, such calumnious imputations? (Cheers.) I do venture to submit to this House that, whatever we may do afterwards, we should take this opportunity—the only form in which it is offered to us—of saying, one and all, whatever party we may belong to, that we do not believe charges of this character, and that we are not prepared thus to treat the members from Ireland, who are in a difficult position, and who we all know are not rich men, but who, I believe, are independent and honourable men, and that we do not accept statements of this character. I hope in the name of the House of Commons, which after all is an assembly of gentlemen (cheers), we shall concur with one voice and declare that we reject and repudiate such statements. (Cheers.)

MR. BALFOUR.—On a point of order may I ask that the clerk at the table should read the whole of the paragraph on which this allusion is based, because it appears to me that it has nothing whatever to do with the supposed imaginary payment of hon. members at the present time, but has to do with a consequence *The Times* foresees of the payment of members by law? ("Hear, hear," and cheers.)

THE CHIEF CLERK then read the paragraph referred to as follows:—"This deliberate judgment of the greatest of the philosophical Radicals, the Gamaliel at whose feet Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce have sat, may not startle some of our modern politicians who know well that what Mill denounced some five-and-thirty years ago they are doing themselves every day, not merely as individuals, but as the framers of Newcastle programmes and the like. When, however, it is clear that new dangers are added to those which Mill foresaw, when it is evident that the adventurer who secures his precarious £300 a year by flattering the multitude will find himself with straitened means in a luxurious society, and at the same time with power to accommodate or to inconvenience powerful interests capable of holding out temptations like those brought to bear in France by the financiers connected with the Panama Canal, can we doubt what the result will be? For a century at least the House of Commons has never been even suspected of corruption. Are we prepared to run the risk of losing this priceless advantage for the sake of enabling the Gladstonian party to keep a band of 'paid mercenaries' in steady attendance at Westminster without depleting the 'war chest' of the party, which is conscious that, at no distant date, it will have to face another appeal to the constituencies? The arrangement, no doubt, would be convenient both to the Gladstonians and to their Irish allies, but we are sure it will not enhance either the immediate popularity or the historical reputation of the Ministry that is ill-advised enough to bring it forward in Parliament."

MR. CLANCY.—I should like to say one or two words. (Cheers.) The leader of the Opposition has said that the attacks in *The Times* did not concern him, but I should say that any unfounded attack on a member of this House does concern him in the position he holds. (Nationalist cheers.) There is one special reason why the House should take action in this matter. This newspaper—*The Times*—has been engaged for the past seven or eight years in a conspiracy to defame the representatives of Ireland, and we all know that three or four years ago it lent itself in the

most audacious and deliberate manner to a system of forgery in order to prove charges against us, which if proved would have led, perhaps, to our expulsion from the House. (Nationalist cheers.) It is high time that a stop was put to such proceedings and to such a method of warfare. The present article is but a continuation of the articles written against the late Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, and for this reason alone I think it is time to press this matter to an issue. (Cheers.)

Mr. COURTNEY.—The leader of the House told us when the passage was read by the clerk that he could not say "No" to the proposition that a gross breach of the privileges of the House had been committed. I confess, on hearing the passage read that I felt with the right hon. gentleman that it was impossible to say "No" to the proposition; but, if I understand the position aright, the clerk read two passages separated by some sentences, and the second passage, which was not read by the hon. member for North Kerry, was distinct from the passage he did read, and was not connected in argument with it. Therefore, on the first blush, the words of the three passages were read as one; and, under a possible misapprehension of their meaning, the course of procedure may involve us in considerable difficulty. Supposing that this question is put and affirmed by the House, you must then move that the editor or printer of the newspaper should appear at the bar. (Ministerial cheers.)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER.—No, no.

Mr. COURTNEY.—My right hon. friend says "No," but he ought to, perhaps not as a matter of strict Parliamentary necessity, but commonsense and justice require that, if you are going to pass the proposition that certain passages amount to a gross breach of privilege, you should not pass a condemnation upon the person who committed that breach without giving him an opportunity of explaining his meaning, defending, or apologizing. (Hear, hear.) As a matter of equity, if not of practice, you ought to follow up the first step by the second. If that argument were offered, I do not know at present what conclusion we should arrive at, for we have not got before us, in black and white, what the words of the argument were. I never read or saw the article until it was brought under the notice of the House by the hon. member for North Kerry. I may add that my own feeling towards these methods of warfare is one of profound abhorrence. (Cheers.) It is impossible to express adequate disgust at those kinds of attacks, from whatever quarter they may come. (Loud cheers.) I regret very much that any one should have been led into the impropriety of making a suggestion which has naturally been amplified into the consequences now before the House. But if the proposition before us is affirmed, we must, as a matter of justice, have the responsible person here to hear what he has to say (hear, hear), and I think we shall enter into a position which may possibly not be very creditable or end very satisfactorily. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that since the leader of the House had said that he must answer yes he himself would not venture to differ.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER.—I did not say that; I said I could not be expected to do so.

Mr. COURTNEY.—Well, I do not wish to say anything rude. I will withdraw it and apologize at once. The right hon. gentleman said he could not be expected to differ from the leader of the House. But I remember a former occasion on which a breach of privilege had occurred when a motion was made that

the conduct of the *Daily News* constituted a breach of privilege, and when a motion was made to bring the responsible person to the bar it was felt that we were in a very awkward position on account of the first step. Some one the next day (for the matter stood over to the next day) suggested a course to the then leader of the House (Mr. Disraeli), that of moving the previous question, and he said he would have done it but it had not occurred to him. That seems to me to be the right course to pursue at this juncture, as I presume that the previous question ought to be put (cries of "No, no"), as a matter of fact; for the convenience of the House and having regard to the results which will attach to the House hereafter. We are pretty well agreed in our sentiments towards these imputations, but whether the gross imputations that constitute a breach of privilege have been made is a disputable fact. (Cries of "No.") I have not had the advantage of reading this article, but it is admitted that the disputable part—the part that you had not heard, Sir, when you expressed an opinion—is a part of the article much lower down, disconnected from the former, not following upon it, and that the dread or suggestion that corruption might hereafter be brought against the House was not brought against hon. gentlemen opposite in their position as members, but with regard to the general question of the payment of members. I submit that the course which is most convenient to the House, and which in the end will be found best calculated to preserve its honour, is not to enter into this kind of warfare by taking official notice of attacks made outside the House. One does not know at all where there is to be an end if we once begin. (Opposition cheers.) An hon. member behind me (Mr. T. W. Russell) has again and again been charged with being the paid agent of the Irish landlords, but he has disregarded the imputation and he was entitled to do so. Hon. members opposite are aware that the feeling of the House is entirely in their favour with regard to the present imputation, and I think, therefore, that they may join me in the suggestion that the matter should be dropped, not by saying "No" to the motion, but by moving the previous question. (Cries of "No, no," "Move," and Opposition cheers.)

The SPEAKER.—Did I understand the right hon. gentleman to move?

Mr. COURTNEY.—No, Sir; I did not move. —

Mr. BRUNNER rose to a point of order from a seat under the gallery, and was received with loud cries of "Order."

The SPEAKER.—Order, order. If the hon. gentleman wishes to address the House he must come within the precincts of the House.

Mr. BRUNNER, who had come within the bar, apologized, and asked whether the right hon. gentleman had moved any amendment to the motion, and said he understood from what the right hon. gentleman had just said that two passages of the article were in question, and not one. What was the motion before the House?

The SPEAKER.—The three paragraphs are before the House, and no amendment has been moved with regard to them.

Mr. DILLON.—I desire to point out that there cannot be the smallest doubt in the mind of any gentleman who will read this article through as to the clear intention of the writer, in the different passages throughout the article, to charge corruption on the Irish party. (Hear, hear.) But if there be any doubt at all I would point to a passage which has not yet

been read, and which runs as follows:—"If this be so"—this is, if the statement of the noble lord be true—"what shall we say of the attempt to carry by means of a majority thus constituted and supported?"—can anything be more direct than that?—"a measure of vast constitutional change—an attempt made, moreover, on the part of a statesman"—mark this, for it settles the question, and makes the charge more pointed and foul—"who has denounced, in an almost frenzied strain, the iniquity of Pitt and Castlereagh in buying up Irish borough-mongers and placemen at the time of the Union?" (Nationalist cheers.) I want to know, if that be not a gross and shameful breach of the privileges of this House, what is? (Cheers.) It refers not to the general action of persons outside the House, but specifically to a Bill under the consideration of the House, and it challenges the Government, first of all, with imitating the conduct of Pitt and Castlereagh, the statesmen whom the leader of the Government is charged with denouncing; and the article charges us directly with imitating the conduct of the infamous men whom Pitt and Castlereagh purchased. (Hear, hear.) The only excuse which the leader of the Opposition put forward—and it is a very lame and mean excuse for neglecting a duty which is his as much as it is the duty of the leader of the House, to defend the honour of the members of this House (cheers) when it is feulily and calumniously attacked (cheers)—the only reason he gives for shirking his duty is this—that he could come down to the House with armfuls of extracts from *United Ireland* and other Irish papers. (Opposition cheers.) Yes, no doubt the right hon. gentleman could find many extracts charging him with misconduct in his administration in Ireland, but I question whether out of the files of *United Ireland* or any other newspaper he could extract a charge of doing any act in this House from corrupt pecuniary motives. (Cheers.) I have never seen such a charge, and even if he could come down and rake up any such charge from Irish newspapers I hold that the two cases are separate and apart. What is the ground on which we claim at the hands of our colleagues protection against this newspaper, *The Times*? This is not an isolated case. (Cheers.) It is done in pursuance of one of the most infamous conspiracies (loud cheers), carried on by a great and powerful journal, which does not circulate at a distance from this place, but which influences the atmosphere of our deliberations—a cowardly, base, and unscrupulous conspiracy—a conspiracy which for ten years this newspaper has carried on by the most unscrupulous and ruthless means to drive us out of public life and to make it impossible for us to do our duty. (Ministerial and Nationalist cheers.) This paper has pursued us with calumny and false charges, and has returned to them again and again when they have proved to be false. They tried perjury against us, they accused us of a murderous conspiracy, and they have spent, I should think, a couple of hundred thousand pounds in constructing a vast conspiracy based upon calumny and forgery, which, had it been successful—as it might have been, because we are open to the repreach of being poor men—would have driven us not only out of this House, but out of the country, if not into gaol. (Nationalist cheers.) That has been defeated and exposed, and now, in collusion with the noble lord, as formerly in collusion with Pigott (cheers and laughter), they have recourse to a base charge of corruption as regards our duty in this House. (Cheers.) I tell the noble viscount that there is not a man sitting round me who, if his action in the House be examined in

its minutest particulars, will be afraid to set it beside that of any other gentleman, whether titled or commoner, who sits in this House. Is this newspaper to be allowed to go on with this base and abominable war of calumny and falsehood against the Irish members in this House, or shall we get the protection which, as honourable men, I think we are entitled to from our colleagues? (Cheers.)

Mr. BARTON, who rose amid cries of "Divide," said,—I only wish to say one word which may perhaps tend towards the smoothing and not the aggravating of this difficulty. As an Irish member, as strongly opposed to hon. members near me as any man can be, I desire to say that, so far as this charge is concerned, I never believed in it and I entirely repudiate it. (Cheers.) But is it wise for the House to go into this matter? It is within the knowledge of every member in this House that the journals of the hon. members themselves have deliberately charged the Tory party with having the Parnellites in their pay. (Opposition cheers and laughter.) He had distinct and definite confirmation of his statement in his hands. What did the *Star* of that day say? (Cheers and cries of "Order.") As a *tu quoque* the *Star* directly and deliberately made a charge of corruption against members of the House. (Cries of "Order.")

The SPEAKER.—I must remind the hon. member that what another paper has done is not the question. (Cheers.) The question is whether the words which have been read from the table constitute a breach of the privileges of the House.

Mr. BARTON, who was greeted with loud cries of "Divide," said that he only meant to show ground why the House should not proceed in this particular matter, because as an Irish member he sincerely regretted that such charges should have been made. (Hear, hear.) He had lived in Ireland all his life, and he did not believe a word of them. (Cheers.) What was the reply given by the newspaper? (Cries of "Oh" and "Order.")

The SPEAKER.—The rule is very strict in these cases. The House has to decide on the matter that has been read, and anything from any other newspaper would not be admissible. (Cheers.)

Mr. BARTON.—Then, Sir, I shall take the advice of my friends and move another motion afterwards. (Cheers.)

Mr. J. REDMOND.—I do not desire to detain the House or to add to the heat of this discussion. I have only risen for the purpose of begging the House not to allow any special pleading on the part of any of its members to turn it aside from a manifest duty to itself as well as to us. (Cheers.) The accusation made against the Irish members is peculiarly cruel by reason of the fact that the Irish members are in the main poor men. They are men who would not have been able to attend this House during the last ten or 12 years to represent the views of their countrymen unless they had been, by the generosity of their fellow-countrymen, provided with means. The knowledge of that fact imposes upon the House of Commons a very serious duty, to defend us in cases of this kind. The hon. and gallant gentleman the member for North Armagh and his friends have alluded to the fact that in the unfortunate internecine struggle in Ireland accusations of a somewhat similar character have not been altogether unheard. I regret to say it is so. As far as I am concerned these accusations have proceeded for the most part from thoughtless speakers, but not altogether. They have also proceeded from

those who ought to have known better, who are sitting near me now, and who ought to be ashamed of themselves. (Loud Opposition cheers.) I for one agree with the late Chairman of Committees that political weapons of this kind should be despised by every honest man, and for my part I have never, during all the excitement in Ireland, descended to the use of such weapons, and the fact that they have been used will never prevent me—not matter how I may have smarted under such accusations, especially when they have come from my own countrymen—from standing with any of my countrymen to repel such accusations when they are made against them. Therefore I seconded the motion, and, speaking as a Nationalist representative, as a member of that body which is composed of poor men, but of men whose honour is as dear to them as the honour of the noblest lord of this House, I ask the House of Commons not to be led aside to any side issue and not to be contented with expressions of regret from individual members. I ask the House to place on record in the most formal manner that an accusation of corrupt motives such as this must be always regarded as a gross breach of the privileges of this House. (Cheers.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—In listening to the two passages which were read from the table it did seem to me somewhat doubtful whether a breach of privilege had in fact been committed. (Cries of "Oh.") But when I heard the passage subsequently read by the hon. member for East Mayo all doubt vanished from my mind; and if that passage is added to the other passages and forms a part of the subject-matter that we have to deal with, then I must say for myself that, if the majority of this House consider it desirable to proceed with this motion, I cannot resist, and must vote with them. (Cheers.) Whether the House should proceed is a matter partly of sentiment and partly of policy. As a question of sentiment, it is possible that opinions may differ. It is true, as has been said, that charges, at least as grave and unfounded, of interested motives have been made against every prominent man, I believe, in this House at one time or another. Most of us have thought those charges worthy only of contemptuous indifference. I should have thought that the Irish members might have taken the same view of the situation. (Cheers.) They have heard from all sides of the House expressions of sympathy with them and of repudiation of the charges which have been made. Under these circumstances I cannot see what more they are going to get by formally entering upon the journals of the House of Commons that the incriminating article is a breach of privilege. But that is a matter for them to consider, and different opinions may exist upon it. But then comes the question of policy—the question of the dignity of this House and the effect upon its future proceedings of any steps that we may now take. If we are to take notice of an article like this, it must be that we shall be called upon to take notice of many others of a similar character (cheers), and the business of the Government may be interfered with by such a course. Under those circumstances it might be possible for the Government, taking into consideration the strong opinion of the House as it has been expressed by the leader of the Opposition as well as by the leader of the Government, not to proceed further. But if the leader of the Government takes a different view, I have no doubt the matter is safe in his hands.

Mr. SEXTON.—If the motion were adopted, I should not proceed to move that the Editor and publisher of *The Times* be required to attend at the

bar until *The Times* had had an opportunity of taking cognizance of the action of the House.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—Will the passage quoted by the hon. member for East Mayo be read from the table?

Mr. DILLON.—I asked the Clerk at the table to read that passage, and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether that cannot now be done. I will make the necessary motion.

The Clerk then read the passage quoted by the hon. member.

Mr. BARTLEY.—I beg to move the previous question.

The SPEAKER.—The question now is "That the question be not now put."

Mr. BALFOUR.—I would suggest to my hon. friend that he should not press his motion to a division. We have pointed out to the House that the course on which they now embark may bring many newspapers other than *The Times* before the House. (Hear, hear.) We have also pointed out that a motion of this kind, not being followed by any other, will not injure *The Times*, and may make the House look rather absurd. We have done our duty in the matter. We must all agree that the imputation on hon. members below the gangway is one which we ought to repudiate, however much we may differ from the policy of the Government. Indeed that only emphasizes our repudiation. (Hear, hear.) However, the Government have now taken their course, and they must abide by the consequences. (Cheers and cries of "Oh.")

The previous question was withdrawn, and Mr. Sexton's motion was carried amid cheers.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. BALFOUR.—Can the First Lord of the Treasury inform us what is likely to be the business for Monday and next week generally?

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I will to-day accede to the wish of the right hon. gentleman as far as Monday is concerned, and possibly to-morrow I may be able to give him additional information. On Monday we propose to move the Speaker out of the chair and to go into Committee of Supply, not for the purpose of taking effective Supply, for which we are not prepared, but for the purpose of filling the chair, which it will be our duty to do. After that we propose to proceed first with the introduction of the Registration Bill (cheers), with respect to which a desire for a preliminary statement has been expressed, then with the Employers' Liability Bill, and in the third place with the Railway Servants' Hours Bill.

NEW WRIT.

On the motion of Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, a new writ was ordered to be issued for the election of a member for the borough of Stockport in the room of Mr. L. J. Jennings, deceased.

ROYAL MESSAGE.

Mr. R. SPENCER brought up the following message from the Queen to the House of Commons:—"It is with great gratification that I have received your loyal and dutiful expression of thanks for the speech with which I have opened the present Parliament." (Cheers.)

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. RECKITT took the oath and his seat for the borough of Pontefract amid Ministerial cheers. Whilst the hon. member was being introduced in the usual way, another member (Mr. Curran) presented himself at the table to take the oath, but without the two supporters who are required to introduce a new member who appears to take his seat. Much merriment was caused by the hon. member's apparently informal

appearance at the table, and it was increased when Dr. Tanner strode up the floor of the House, took hold of the hon. member's arm, and drew him back to the bar. Supported by Dr. Tanner and another Irish member,

Mr. CURRAN returned to the table and took the oath, and when he had done so he explained, amid laughter and cheers, that he had not made a mistake in coming to the table alone, as he had been elected at the general election, and therefore required no introduction.

THE HOME RULE BILL.

The adjourned debate on Mr. Gladstone's motion for leave to bring in the Home Rule Bill was resumed by,

LORD R. CHURCHILL, who was received with cheers. He said,—It is now upwards of two years since I had the honour of addressing the House of Commons, and therefore it cannot be said that in recent days I have occupied unnecessarily the valuable time of Parliament. But these are very remarkable times which we have reached. (Hear, hear.) The days of the Tory Government, which lasted for six years and only terminated recently, were days of great peace and great tranquillity, and it may be said of the country, translating a French phrase, “During that time you have slumbered on both ears.” The country undoubtedly prospered, and the strength of the country grew. (Cheers.) But an untoward transformation has supervened. Times of excitement and political perturbation and sharp party conflicts have recurred as somehow or other they seem always to recur when the First Lord of the Treasury assumes the possession of power. (Cheers.) Rival parties are prepared now to try their strength on matters connected with a vital portion of the Constitution and affecting very greatly and probably for all time, if the proposed changes are made, the power and strength of the British Empire. Under these circumstances I do not hesitate to offer what feeble services I can render to the party with which I have been long and habitually connected (cheers), and I trust that I may ask the House of Commons for some portion, at any rate, of that generous indulgence which in former days was so lavishly bestowed upon me, whilst I endeavour to examine to the best of my ability the proposal for the government of Ireland which the First Lord of the Treasury has submitted to the Parliament of the Queen. The right hon. gentleman is probably dissatisfied with the prolongation of this debate and no doubt long debates on the first reading of a Bill are unusual, but I think the House will agree that there are two very conclusive reasons why no objection should be taken to the length of the debate on this occasion. In the first place this Bill in no way resembles any ordinary legislation, for it proposes to effect what amounts to a Constitutional revolution (cheers) and to alter profoundly the relations between the three countries which compose the United Kingdom. When I heard the right hon. gentleman make his speech on Monday afternoon I thought it almost impossible to realize the magnitude and novelty of his scheme. I thought I was listening to a chapter out of that very singular book “Alice in Wonderland.” As hon. members will remember, every incident of that singular narrative is extremely causeless and unreasonable, and the events are marvellously complicated, and the same may, I think, be said of this Bill. The right hon. gentleman proposes to erect an edifice of almost monstrous dimensions upon foundations the most slender. No real basis exists for this extravagant construction. The

measure seems to me to be a wilful and gratuitous interference with the political relations of the three countries. How does the case stand? Ireland has been for some years in a tranquil and normal condition. I cannot see that there is any herculean task of government or administration that needs to be accomplished there, and, curiously enough, Ireland is of the same mind (cheers and laughter), because undoubtedly at the last election this event took place, which puzzled even the intellect of the First Lord of the Treasury. Ireland has added five votes to the Unionist party, and of these two were added from the metropolitan district of Dublin, which you really would have thought would have been the home and centre of Irish Nationalism, if Irish Nationalism were the thing that it is represented to be. (Cheers.) That is not all; it is admitted that in Scotland no great enthusiasm was shown for the Irish policy which it was supposed the right hon. gentleman would bring forward. (Cheers.) There may have been enthusiasm about other subjects which may have embarrassed his party and himself; but on that subject I think it will be admitted that there was no enthusiasm in Scotland. (Hear, hear.) Besides this, the Liberal majorities in Scotland were much smaller than Scotch elections previously showed, and on the whole the Unionist party more than held their own. (Hear, hear.) But when I come to England, what do I find?—a heavy majority against the policy of the right hon. gentleman, a majority, I think, of 70, and, indeed, if the uncontested seats are counted, I believe that that majority would be upwards of 80. (Hear, hear.) So that in Great Britain there was a large majority against the proposed change in the government of Ireland which the right hon. gentleman is proposing. (Hear, hear.) That being so, and the right hon. gentleman being unable to show the House any imperative reason for this enormous change, it becomes all the more important to examine very closely the principles of the measure and to analyse and to show every defect and danger not in the details of the Bill, but in its actual principles. There is another reason why the discussion of the measure on the first reading has been rendered necessary. In the speech which the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister made on Monday—a most luminous and eloquent speech—which for many reasons seems to me to rival and even to excel any of his former efforts (loud Ministerial cheers), no one could fail to notice that, owing to the necessary restrictions of the time of the House of Commons, many important and first-class details in relation to the question were either passed over, or neglected, or suppressed. I think that it is the duty of the Opposition on the very first opportunity, and before any definite step in the progress of the measure be taken, to endeavour to extract fuller information on what I may call the great details and the primary provisions of the measure, so that Parliament and the public outside Parliament interested in the matter may be fully informed of the reasons and the nature of the issues which the right hon. gentleman has thought fit at this period of her Majesty's reign to raise. (Hear, hear.) I think the right hon. gentleman the Chief Secretary might, indeed, earlier in the debate have supplemented the statement of the Prime Minister, because he must be the greatest authority in the Cabinet next to the Prime Minister himself on the measure, and it would have been easy for him before now to have satisfied what I think are the reasonable desires of a great portion of the House. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury seems

to be untaught by any previous experience on this subject ; he has had, to no purpose apparently, six or seven years for observation and reflection upon Irish affairs, and, apparently, knowing nothing of the incidents of the late election which I have summarily alluded to, he has reproduced in a somewhat varied form the proposals for the government of Ireland which he brought forward in 1886. What are these proposals and what is their name ? I never have called them and I never will call them by any title than that of the repeal of the Union (cheers), nor have I ever called the party who supports those proposals by any other title than of the party of Repeal. (Cheers.) I cannot follow the right hon. gentleman into what I think was a very fanciful definition of the nature of the Act of Union. I understood him to say that what it established was a unity of sovereignty. That is a word greatly calculated to perplex, and puzzle, and embarrass the ordinary mind. I think the right hon. gentleman said the union of Parliaments was subsidiary to the unity of sovereignty of this kind. With great respect I question the truth of that proposition. The union of the Crowns in a certain sense existed long before 1800—indeed it may be said to have existed since the conquest of Ireland 700 years ago. There was always one Sovereign of England and Ireland and afterwards one Sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland, and so there is one Sovereign now of Great Britain and Ireland. (Hear, hear.) I cannot therefore, unless sovereignty means something different from what ordinary minds can understand, quite see the particular point in saying that that Union established a unity of sovereignty. (Hear, hear.) I think that the essence of the Act of Union was essentially a union of Parliaments. (Cheers.) Here are the words of the Act of Union :—“ That it be the third article of the Act of Union that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be styled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.” (Loud cheers.) That was consolidating the Parliament of Ireland which had existed up to that time and that of Great Britain into one Parliament for the whole of the United Kingdom—one Imperial Parliament. (Hear, hear.) That was the effect of the Act of Union, and to my mind it is that principle of the Act of Union that you are now going to upset and to destroy. (Cheers.) It is utterly needless to talk of the unity of Imperial sovereignty after you have repealed that Act, because the great principle of the Act was the union of the two Parliaments. Why was the Parliament of Ireland united to the Parliament of Great Britain by that Act of Union ? There were reasons of the most imperative character that actually dictated the course pursued not only in the one country but in the other. English and Scotch influence and weight and opinion were called into action by the actual circumstances of the day. They were called into action to hold the peace, as it were, and to maintain the tranquillity of the opposing groups and the opposing parties which for generations had distracted Ireland, had brought her at the time of the Union to social ruin, to utter anarchy, had placed her in peril of foreign conquest, and had landed her in hopeless national insolvency. (Cheers.) There was another great reason for the Union—namely, that there was no security for Great Britain against her enemies, who were at that time numerous and strong, while Ireland was in independent hands or in hands approaching to independence. (Hear, hear.) Ireland had to provide under her Constitution before 1800 resources for the protection of her coasts and her people, and the only authority that

could provide those resources in Ireland was the Irish Parliament, and it is a notorious historical fact that England could never count with any certainty at all on the capacity or the willingness of the Irish Parliament to perform its duty with respect to the defence of Great Britain and Ireland. (Hear, hear.) Those were the reasons for the Act of Union. The Union was a matter of life and death to England, and it is also true that at that time it was a matter of life and death to Ireland that there should be one Parliament and one Executive Government ruling over the whole of the United Kingdom under the sovereignty of one Crown. (Cheers.) It appears to me that those reasons exist in all their force in the present day. (Cheers.) Parties, race, and creeds in Ireland still under certain circumstances require control. Although the country is normally tranquil, no one in Ireland will doubt that all the elements of disorder, apparently now quiescent, are only lying dormant ; nor can there be tranquillity in Ireland nor safety to England unless the might of the Imperial Parliament, with all its enormous and immeasurable resources, rules over Ireland and rules over England and Scotland alike. (Cheers.) The doctrines I have ventured to state are doctrines—I might almost call them dogmas—which were held to be almost sacred by every Englishman and every Scotchman, and by every member of Parliament from those two countries, up to within a very few years ago. The expression, which, I think, was first formulated by Mr. Canning, “ Repeal the Union, restore the Heptarchy,” has found an echo in almost every British heart. During almost 40 years of the career of the First Lord of the Treasury that dogma found no stronger supporter than the right hon. gentleman himself. For reasons which I do not now wish to go into, and the examination of which would not conduce to the harmony of our discussions, the right hon. gentleman abandoned the stronghold of the Union. (Cheers.) Although I hardly imagine that he will succeed in his present policy, still, if he were successful, and if Home Rule were entered upon, then, just as the revolution against Charles I. was known in history under the title of the Great Rebellion, so the abandonment and destruction of the Union will be known hereafter to our posterity as the Great Betrayal (loud cheers), and this will be indelibly connected with the great name of the present Prime Minister. (Renewed cheering.) Let me now proceed to examine briefly some of the proposals which are now put forward, and some of the institutions which the right hon. gentleman appears to wish to substitute for those at present existing. He proposes to create by his Bill a Parliament in Ireland, of which he gives this description—“ practically separate and independent.”

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I never used the words.

LORD R. CHURCHILL.—I took the expression from *The Times* newspaper report. I have not got it here, but I will engage to furnish it.

Mr. GLADSTONE was understood to say that he used the word “ separate ” in connexion with the word “ independent.” A separate Parliament it undoubtedly would be.

LORD R. CHURCHILL.—I will furnish the right hon. gentleman with *The Times* report. It is extraordinary how the word should have got into the report in *The Times*, as well as, I believe, into other newspaper reports of the right hon. gentleman’s speech, if the word was not made use of. But, even if the right hon. gentleman did not use the word, that is practically a correct description of what he proposes. In addition to the Irish Parliament, there is to be an

Irish Executive, which will be controlled by the veto to be exercised by the Crown. The veto has been much discussed, and the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster went very fully into the matter in his speech the other night, and, as I understand it, the veto of the Lord Lieutenant can be overridden, under certain circumstances, by the Ministry here, on the advice of the Crown. I also heard the Chancellor of the Duchy say that it was not necessary to discuss the use of the veto, because, practically, it is never used. (Ministerial cheers.) I think that is what he wished the House of Commons to infer.

Mr. BRYCE.—Certainly not.

LORD R. CHURCHILL.—Perhaps not the bulk of the House of Commons, but a certain section. (Laughter and cheers.) The hon. member for Waterford expressed the greatest anxiety about the proposed veto, and, referring to the speech of the Chancellor of the Duchy, he said he felt perfectly certain that no one would make use of the veto to annoy or to embarrass anybody. But, in spite of the assurance that the veto would never be used by them, he could not overcome the fear that some day there might be a Tory Government again, and he expatiated on the use that the iniquitous Tory Government might make of the veto.

Mr. J. REDMOND.—No, no. I was answering what I considered to be the threat of the leader of the Opposition; and I said that I did not believe that the threat would ever become a reality.

LORD R. CHURCHILL.—I do not agree. I attach some importance to the speech of the leader of the Opposition. But I can suggest to the Irish party, if they will forgive me for doing so, a very easy remedy. They should induce the right hon. gentleman to insert in his Bill a clause, carefully drawn, prohibiting for ever the existence in the future of a Tory Government. (Loud laughter.) But what more does the right hon. gentleman suggest to insure a suitable Government in England and in Scotland? Not content with establishing two Parliaments and two Executives, he brings into operation, with a dexterity more perverse than I have ever known, two separate majorities in the Imperial Parliament. (Cheers.) On the day after this measure is passed, if it does pass, if this House happens to be engaged on certain affairs, and if the Irish delegation is absent, one party in this House will be in a minority; and the next day, when Parliament happens to be engaged on other business, in a different category, involving the attendance of the Irish members, the section which was in a minority the day before would then be in a majority. The suggestion to retain the Irish members in this House works out in that way. The Government may have a majority one day, upon an Imperial question, and may be put in a minority the next day upon an important British question; while the Government which would follow them would occupy exactly the same position, only *vice versa*. Such a magnificent arrangement might work capitally in Japan (loud laughter), but we are so perfectly untrained in these extraordinary kaleidoscopic manoeuvres, which seem necessary to carry out the proposals of the right hon. gentleman, that it will be difficult to get the House of Commons to adopt them. But in these ideals of constitutional government, two Parliaments in the United Kingdom, two Governments in the United Kingdom, and two separate and distinct majorities in the Imperial Parliament, which I have partially described and set forth, may, according to the right hon. gentleman, one of the profoundest and most

learned students of English politics, be accurately described as a most perfect specimen of Imperial unity. (Loud laughter.) All I can say is, that, in face of such a statement as that, my reason totters and reels; and, if the right hon. gentleman is correct, and, if his definition of Imperial unity is a natural and true one, then I think that I and my friends have nothing whatever to do but to retire from public life; because it would obviously be grossly improper to have further part or lot in it. I pass rapidly to the financial arrangements which the right hon. gentleman mentioned in his speech, but I shall not dwell on them, because they have been examined very ably by my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, and I have only one remark to make on this subject, as to the manner in which those financial proposals may work. I understand that the Irish customs will be collected and appropriated by the British Exchequer, and that the other revenues of Ireland will be collected and appropriated by the Irish Exchequer. I received yesterday from a gentleman of very great authority in the City a communication in reference to those proposals. It appears that, although these proposals are new as applied to Ireland, there is really no special originality in them. This gentleman says:—“With regard to Mr. Gladstone’s proposals as to the disposal of the Irish taxes, they are certainly new when emanating from an English Government, but otherwise there is nothing in them very novel, although in the countries in which they have been tried they have had but a very qualified success. I may cite the Argentine Confederation” (laughter), “where the Central Government keeps the customs and allows the provincial Government to appropriate the same taxes as those Mr. Gladstone proposes giving to Ireland. As may be supposed, the provinces, released from central control, squander their money” (laughter), “and when the members of the provincial Governments take their seats in the Central Assembly they steadily refuse to vote anything the nation requires until large subsidies in some shape or other are made to the provincial Assemblies, with such a result that bankruptcy was never, I suppose, spelt in bigger letters.” (Laughter.) I think that the parallel is very complete, except of course that I should be sorry to suggest that by gentlemen below the gangway the Irish finances would be managed on the same basis as the Argentine basis (laughter), but you never can tell who may succeed those gentlemen. (Laughter.) It seems to me that a system which admits of such results, and a system which has actually produced those results in large, a populous, and a progressive country, is hardly a system to offer either to the English and Scotch people, or to the Irish people for the arrangement of their finance. (Hear, hear.) The Irish exchequer might be empty. (Laughter.) That is just possible (laughter), and at the same time the Irish vote might be wanted by the party in power, whoever it was (laughter), to carry some economical, some taxing reform, or some very important British measure. Naturally the support of the Irish party would be given to the Government on conditions, and the form those conditions would take would be a grant in aid, or, perhaps, loans on easy terms. (Hear, hear.) I pass to another subject of great importance—the question of religious freedom in Ireland, and what the right hon. gentleman in his speech called security for personal freedom. I will read to the House an extract from the right hon. gentleman’s speech, in which he deals with this question. He says:—“Then as regards the incapaci-

ties imposed, gentlemen have already been made familiar with them in the Bill of 1886. I will only describe them as relating to two subjects in these most large and general terms by way of a slight sketch." I may remark on that expression that religious freedom and security for personal freedom are perhaps the most important matters to consider in arranging a new system of government, and I think the House is entitled to expect something more than a slight sketch of the principles which are going to define their limits. (Cheers.) "They are intended," he says, "for the security of religious freedom—and there they touch upon establishments and education—and for the security of personal freedom, with respect to which we have endeavoured to borrow—I hope without trenching upon any just sentiment of Irish patriotism—where we thought we could safely borrow from one of the modern amendments of the American Constitution." I challenge any member of this House—with the exception of the author of that sentence and of the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy, who has an intimate acquaintance with the American Constitution—to extract any glimmer or the faintest part of meaning from that sentence, when you consider what is the important and vital subject to which it refers. Does that sentence mean that any Irishman, who happens to imagine, or to be informed, that he has been aggrieved in his legitimate rights by the action of an Irish Parliament, can go to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and have the matter tried, and if he has been wronged that he may receive relief? Does it mean that? The right hon. gentleman gives me no answer. (Hear, hear.) If that is not the meaning of the sentence, what is the meaning of it, because we ought to have some explanation of what is intended. (Cheers.) If that be the meaning, imagine, after a few years of an Irish Parliament, what a procession of pilgrims there would be from all parts of Ireland to the portals of the august tribunal of the Judicial Committee. (Laughter.) What an extraordinary increase there would be in the passenger traffic between Ireland and London. (Laughter.) And what strikes me as being very attractive about this proposal is that appearance at the Privy Council, with witnesses, documents, and legal expense, is absolutely within the reach of the commonest Irish peasant. (Laughter.) If the sentence does not mean that, I should like to know what it does mean. (Hear, hear.) The only assumption I can make at present is that religious freedom and security for personal freedom find their sole protection under the Bill in the working of some modern Yankee notion, of which the great authority on Yankee notions apparently knows nothing. (Laughter.) The system of denominational education is almost now practically established in Ireland, and I am in favour of that system under the control of the Imperial Parliament, because I feel certain that every religious denomination in Ireland will from the Imperial Parliament receive equal treatment, equal liberality, and equal bounty. (Hear, hear.) But under an Irish Parliament we should have no such security. (Cheers.) The chances are that one denomination alone would be favoured, and that the others would be skimmed and starved. (Hear, hear.) What can you expect of a Parliament which, on educational questions, will probably be inspired by Archbishop Walsh and by Dr. Nelly? (Laughter.) What provision is made in the Bill for the free and unrestrained education of the children of our Protestant countrymen in Ireland? (Hear, hear.) On that subject the right hon. gentleman

gave us no information, and I can learn absolutely nothing as to whether we are to derive any security from the modern amendment of the American Constitution. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") I pass to consider the case of Trinity College, and to inquire what will be the position of that great institution, which has been the glory of Ireland in the past, and which is now a bright and splendid University, illuminating not only the Irish, but the whole world of intellect. (Cheers.) For generations the Irish Hierarchy have cast a voracious eye on that great institution, on its endowments, and on its possessions; and it looks as if they were likely soon to be able to gratify their desire, if this measure pass into law. There is another fear which adds to my uneasiness. In 1873, when the right hon. gentleman was administering the affairs of Ireland, with that success which has always characterized his Irish administration (laughter), he proposed to abolish Trinity College. The right hon. gentleman shook his head. He did not propose to abolish it in name; he proposed to abolish it in nature, and to such a length was the transformation carried that in order to save the sensibility of the Irish Hierarchy the right hon. gentleman, in one of the clauses of the Bill, prohibited this great University from endowing any chairs for the teaching of moral philosophy and modern history. (Laughter and cheers.) I may say that this attempt led very soon afterwards to the disappearance of the right hon. gentleman from office. (Laughter.) I am justified in fearing that the disposition of the right hon. gentleman towards Trinity College would not be one of extreme clemency. I own that I have very little confidence in the value of the professions made by the hon. member for Waterford in the most dulcet and mellifluous tones as to the strong spirit of toleration and of justice and the determination to see fair play between man and man, between Catholic and Protestant, and landlord and occupier in Ireland. Past experience does not warrant very much reliance being placed on professions of that kind (cheers); and I do not think that it will be wise for any of us to make large political investments on the strength of them. (Cheers and laughter.) I have still less reliance upon them so far as Trinity College and education in Ireland are concerned, certainly one of the most important matters. I wish to know, "Will the Irish Parliament have power to repeal statutes, or portions of statutes, passed by the wisdom of the Imperial Parliament, or will they allow the statutes to fall into desuetude?" That seems to me to be rather important; and I should also like to know what will be the powers of the Courts of Justice in Ireland to enforce their decisions and orders. Will they be absolutely above the Irish Parliament in enforcing those decisions and orders without any possibility of resistance, or will it be in the power of the Irish Parliament in one way or another to control them, or will the Irish Parliament have control of the civil and military forces in Ireland? That brings me to another important point on which I should like to have information. Under what authority will the troops in Ireland be? Will they be, as they are now, independent of the Irish Parliament, and will that body in no circumstances whatever have any control over them? If so, I see a frightful danger to the infant Constitution when a Government will some day instruct an Irish Commander-in-Chief to execute on the House of Commons of Ireland a sort of repetition of "Pride's Purge." (Laughter and cheers.) It is a constitutional question. Will the troops be under the authority of the Irish Parliament,

or under the authority of the Viceroy, and will the Commander-in-Chief take orders from the Viceroy, and will the Viceroy give the orders on his own account or on the advice of his Ministers? I point out to you that these questions are absolutely necessary. (Cheers.) You are going to create a totally new government in Ireland; you are going to give this Irish Parliament tremendous powers, and the whole of the circumstances of Irish government, if your measure passes, will be completely changed; and those who have not only a political but a personal interest in Ireland may fairly insist on the utmost information being given in detail as to the nature of the government you are going to set up. (Cheers.) What are you doing in Ireland? You are creating a Parliament. A Parliament must necessarily have very great powers, and I do not think it will be found, judging from history, that you can possibly set limits to the power of a Parliament which it is able of itself to acquire. You have given the Irish people this weapon of power in the shape of this Parliament, and you have also sharpened that weapon by retaining in the midst of your own Parliament 80 Irish members, which enables them to force concessions from you on every point that is valid to them. You have said more than once that the Irish are a nation. I do not know whether they are a nation or not; I do not care to discuss the point, because it is not the question at issue. I cannot call the Irish a nation in the sense in which we call the English, Scotch, or Welsh a nation. If the right hon. gentleman calls them a nation, and if they like to call themselves a nation, I am quite satisfied. It is much more important to consider, however, what the Irish people are; and this is certain of the Irish people. They are perhaps the people in the world who have the most acute genius for taking advantage of whatever opportunities offer to promote what they may think to be the interests of their nation. (Laughter.) If you give to a people such as the Irish people a power under the peculiar conditions proposed here, you will have given them almost irresistible power for exacting from you any constitutional concessions which will enable them to use their power independently of you far more freely than now. You would have a solid contingent of 60 or 70 Irish votes to put a British Government in a minority at any moment, and when we see that the party opposite have conceded so much in existing circumstances, *a fortiori* they will concede almost everything that may be asked when those arrangements come into full force. (Cheers.) I pass over the constabulary, only remarking that the state of this historic force appears to be a very sad one. Six years is the time in which that force can be extinguished. There is no man in that force, be he officer or private, who will know at what moment he may be set adrift. (Cheers.) That is the treatment which the right hon. gentleman proposes to mete out to a force which in the most unexampled trial and difficulties, almost insuperable, have never faltered in their loyalty and fidelity. (Cheers.) Then, the landlords of Ireland are the unfortunate people called the "English garrison," and that was enough to damn them in the estimation of some persons. (Laughter.) For some years the Irish landlords have been suffering under the punishment of expiation which the right hon. gentleman when he was Prime Minister began to inflict upon them; and now the right hon. gentleman proposes to give them three years' grace. After that they are to be handed over to the tender mercy of their hereditary foes. (Cheers.) I should like to ask a question about

people of whom we have heard little about lately—the evicted tenants. (Laughter.) What has become of these poor people; and can the Government tell us what has become of Mr. Justice Mathew? What has become, also, of the report of the Commission which was to enlighten Parliament at the moment of its meeting and the remedies which were proposed for the unfortunate situation in which these people find themselves? I will also ask—"Will the Irish Parliament have power to vote subsidies for the maintenance of these evicted tenants?" because it would make the process of eviction very easy for the tenants to undergo, and not uncomfortable. (Laughter.) But, on the other hand, I admit that the evicted tenants have been the victims of what appears to have been the unfortunate advice given to them by two leading members of the Irish party, who will probably be two leading members of the Irish Government, and whose disposition, I suppose, will be to make some provision for those they have deluded. I, therefore, ask whether any member of the Government will give information as to whether the financial powers of the Irish Ministry and Parliament will give such a disposition of the public funds? Now, I should like to say a final and brief word on Ulster. (Cheers.) I think the province of Ulster is the most important feature perhaps in the whole Irish community, the most important consideration in any measure you may propose for the government of Ireland. In 1886 the right hon. gentleman, though he made no special provision for Protestant Ulster in his Bill, very clearly intimated, I think in his speech, that in Committee he might have certain provisions to propose for Protestant Ulster. The fate of Ulster in 1886 was practically left to the scramble of the Committee. (Laughter.) But in 1893 the situation seems to be worse, because no provision whatever is made in the Bill for the safety and security of the minority in Ireland which is composed of Protestant Ulster. No mention of it was made in the speech of the right hon. gentleman; Ulster seems to have passed entirely from his mind (cheers), and apparently it is to him no longer a factor in the Irish situation. I suppose that Ulster will have to make its own arrangements for itself. (Cheers.) I think perhaps that will be the best solution of the difficulty. (Cheers and laughter.) I have always thought that Ulster was capable of looking after itself. (Cheers.) The party under the leadership of the right hon. gentleman is, I have always gathered, somewhat sceptical and incredulous about the possible resistance of Ulster to an Irish Parliament. (Ministerial cheers.) You do not believe in the resistance of Ulster to an Irish Parliament? (Ministerial cheers.) Well, I do. (Loud cheers.) I have seen a good deal and learned a good deal of the Ulster people. My experience of Protestant Ulster does not date from yesterday. They are a very stern and dour folk. (Laughter.) They adhere with uncompromising fidelity to the religion which they profess and to the political cause which they believe to be bound up with the safety of that religion. (Cheers.) I have always had a very strong belief, and I have it now, that Protestant Ulster may be too much for the Irish Parliament. (Cheers and laughter.) I think the right hon. gentleman has been unwise and imprudent to leave Ulster, not only out of the provisions of his Bill, but altogether out of his calculations. (Cheers.) There is this to be said for Ulster in the event of their taking steps to save themselves in the great changes with which you menace them as regards Irish government. The Ulster Protestants have rendered to your Imperial

Parliament, and to your Imperial Executive, during 93 years, the most unshaken loyalty (cheers), and they have been distinguishd, with hardly any notable exceptions, for their order; and they have undoubtedly, by their marvellous industry, turned portions of Ulster into almost what I might call the manufacturing garden of the world. (Cheers.) They have done that under your Government; under your Government they have grown up and multiplied; under the provisions of the Act of Union they have elected loyally to live. (Cheers.) I do not notice the legends which the right hon. gentleman formerly indulged in as to what the Ulster people were before the Union—at the time of the great Irish crisis of 1798. I do not take the slightest interest in these legends; I do not care what the Ulster people were at that time; I know what they are now, and the Imperial Parliament has no moral right to compel them to transfer their allegiance to any other body, least of all to a Parliament which has been described as practically an independent and a separate Parliament, and in which Parliament the majority must mainly be a majority of the hereditary foes of Protestant Ulster. (Cheers.) I have heard it sometimes discussed whether Ulster would fight. (Laughter.) I have heard of an Irish gentleman of great position, Ulster born, and more Liberal than anything else in his politics, who was asked the other day whether, if this Irish Parliament were constituted, Ulster would resist by force, and who said that, on the whole, his opinion was that such resistance might take place because of this reason—that civil wars in history had generally broken out and taken place either on religious questions or on taxation questions, and that Ulster would probably be basely wounded on both these points. (Cheers.) I stand here in the House of Commons as a member of Parliament, and Sir, in your presence, and in the presence of her Majesty's Ministers, this I will say—I take the earliest opportunity of stating that everything I said in Belfast, and generally about Ulster years ago, and which excited much condemnation, and, I must say, the severe condemnation, of the First Lord of the Treasury, I reiterate now. (Cheers.) Every word; I take nothing back; I modify nothing. (Cheers.) I used these words in the plainest English sense which could be put upon them. I meant the Ulster people to take them in that sense; I say them again now. (Cheers.) I do not think that in taking up that position I shall stand alone. I think the bulk of the members of the Unionist party will have great sympathy, if not more than sympathy, with the resistance which Ulster may offer to the domination of such a body—a body so odious to the people of Ulster—as that which you seek to set up. (Cheers.) I think I shall have some sympathy, and perhaps more than sympathy, in these opinions from the Nonconformist bodies of England and Scotland (cheers), who share not passively but actively the affection of their compatriots and their co-religionists in Ulster for the religious doctrines which they profess as well as for the form of government which they think essential to these doctrines. They, I think, will speak out and act, and I am sure that the party opposite and that a Government which has the responsibility of governing Ireland would make no more fatal error than to underrate and despise and ridicule the spirit of Ulster. To leave all mention of Ulster out of your Bill, to make no mention of her rights or of her merits, and not to bear in mind at the same time the history of Protestant Ulster is, I think and must be to every fair-minded man, the most craven insult over

offered by a Government to a loyal community. (Cheers.) In conclusion, I would say to the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who made a sort of appeal to us the other night to moderate our opposition, and who seemed to think that a compromise on this question was possible, that there can be no compromise, not even the shadow of a shade of a compromise. (Cheers.) Sometimes I fancy, particularly when I hear such an extraordinary proposition as that put forward, that the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues hardly fairly or adequately realize the tremendous forces that are arrayed, and will be arrayed, against their Irish policy. (Cheers.) Here, in the House of Commons, I admit I have never counted on the Unionist party being able to defeat the measure of the right hon. gentleman. (Ministerial cheers.) I recognize that they have a majority, and I will not attempt for a moment to analyze the composition of that majority. (Cheers.) A majority of 40 is undoubtedly a majority of 40 (hear, hear), and numerical facts of that kind are rather hard to get over. I have no doubt that various motives, honourable and respectable motives—partly loyalty, partly discipline, the fear of premature dissolution and long absence from office—will induce that majority, at any rate for some time, to keep itself solid. And therefore I place the House of Commons outside of my consideration and make the right hon. gentleman a present of it. (Laughter.) But I move the issue to other courts of equal and of even greater power. (Cheers.) In the House of Lords (Ministerial laughter and cheers) I think it is possible that the right hon. gentleman and his party may find a very formidable obstacle. (Laughter.) I know that the action of the House of Lords on great questions is received with derision by hon. gentlemen opposite, but of this I am perfectly certain, that the peers of England on this emergent and vital occasion will not be frightened either by ridicule or by menace. (Cheers.) What forces have they behind them? They have behind them some 320 members of the Unionist party in the House of Commons; they have behind them the immense majority in the constituencies of England. (Cheers.) They will be fighting, if as I suppose they will fight and oppose your Bill, for the best cause that the peers ever fought for, because they will not be fighting for any class interest, they will not be fighting for an illiberal object, they will not be fighting for any selfish motive, but they will be fighting for the rights of the English people. (Cheers.) I have no fear that in fighting in such a cause as that you will be able to upset and overcome the House of Lords. (Cheers.) But beyond the House of Lords there is a third tribunal before which sooner or later all of us must appear. It is a higher tribunal than either the House of Commons or the House of Lords, and from that tribunal there is no appeal. It is before the English constituencies that the ultimate issue between us must be decided. (Cheers.) I look to the people of England as a sure support. (Cheers.) It is to the operatives of Lancashire; it is to the miners of Yorkshire and in the North; it is to the artisans of the Midlands; and it is to the tried loyalty of what I may call the almost solid South that I look to give us a majority big enough to overwhelm the party of Repeal as it exists in its composite form at the present moment. (Cheers.) These classes of the population which I have enumerated know by instinct which is unfailing that their rights are endangered, and I rely upon their determination, on their tenacity, and on their courage to refuse to

surrender to a section of the Irish people English rights upon which the strength of the Empire, the maintenance of their commerce and manufactures, and the safety of their homes absolutely depend. (Cheers.) Never will the English allow any minority whatever, no matter of what nationality, to impair their existence. The Unionists are, in my sincere opinion, fighting for the life of England. (Cheers.) I know the nature of the English people, and thank God I know that this Bill cannot pass. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. ROSS said he could not imagine any scheme more ridiculous than that proposed as to the three electoral bodies. It appeared to him that every difficulty which was before the House in 1886 was before it again, and those difficulties were unsolved and insoluble. He did not understand how any Prime Minister could come down to that House and make such a proposal. It was perfectly clear that the language used indicated that Ministers were in a hopeless state of perplexity at the present time. The attitude of the Prime Minister as to the inclusion or exclusion of the Irish members showed that it was a mere excuse for the shelving of the Bill. They must all recognize the gracious manner in which the Prime Minister introduced the Bill. Having heard him, he could quite conceive and understand the extraordinary fascination which carried all before it and made him almost omnipotent in this country. But he had to look at the matter of the speech. (Hear, hear.) He sincerely believed, whether he was right or wrong, that there never was a more cruel or more unjust measure put before the nation than this Home Rule Bill. He had looked to see what protection there was for minorities. There was really none. They had heard about that extraordinary body the Legislative Council (laughter) and about the veto. This was the unpractical scheme of a man of letters, but it was not the practical scheme of the man of business. If the Executive was in the hands of men they could not trust, what mattered at all the amiable declarations in an Act of Parliament. (Cheers.) Take as an example the case of men committed for trial on a charge of agrarian murder. What had they seen in the past. He scarcely knew an agrarian case in his experience where a murder was committed in which many hon. members had not thrown every difficulty in the way of the murderers being brought to justice. ("Hear, hear" and "No, no.") The jury, the counsel, and the Judges were vilified, and, indeed, all concerned. (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances was it not madness to trust these gentlemen? Under the Bill there would not be the slightest security for life and property in Ireland. If after the encounter with the Land League the right hon. gentleman had come down and said, "I have struggled against them but I am beaten; and now I propose to hand over to them the control of the police, the judiciary, and the land, I will trust them"—why, the whole civilized world would have been astounded, and yet that was the very thing that the right hon. gentleman was doing now. (Hear, hear.) There might have been some excuse for it then. But since then seven years had elapsed, and Ireland had been freed from agrarian crime and conspiracy. If that was not believed by the right hon. gentleman let him ask the commercial classes in Ireland as to the effect of the administration of the leader of the Opposition. (Cheers.) They knew the state of the country, and they knew what the object of the Nationalist members was. Their declared object was to make Ireland a nation. (Hear, hear.)

The object of the right hon. gentleman opposite was to go as far as he could with decency in assisting the Nationalist members to attain that object. This Bill put an end to liberty and to all that made life worth living in Ireland. If one part of the United Kingdom had served the Empire better than another, it was the North of Ireland. It had done much for English liberty in the past, and had acted a creditable part in the history of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) What had Ulstermen done, he would like to know, that they should be practically cast away? There was a time when the words of the Prime Minister had the greatest weight in Ulster. There was a time when there was hardly a house in the province in which the right hon. gentleman's portrait was not to be found. There was a time when no one could persuade the people of Ulster better than the right hon. gentleman. They had heard all the right hon. gentleman could say in favour of Home Rule, and their determination not to accept Home Rule was unalterable. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman had said that Ulster had not always been of that determination, but all their grievances were removed, and the movement to which the right hon. gentleman referred completely stopped, and from that time up to the present Ulstermen had been as good subjects as any her Majesty possessed. (Hear, hear.) If they had not altered their state of mind he doubted whether the right hon. gentleman would now have had a British Empire to dismember. (Hear, hear.) It was maintained that the men of Ulster wished to uphold their ascendancy. They had never sought for ascendancy, and they had never enjoyed an ascendancy. (Hear, hear.) They had, on the contrary, always tried to live with their fellow-countrymen on the best of terms, and now they met their reward in a Bill which practically placed them under the feet of a section of their countrymen. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister had again and again assured Ulstermen that he would never cast them off. They relied upon those assurances, and they believed that no politician would go back upon them. He submitted that the reasons which the right hon. gentleman had given for his present attitude were not the real reasons. The real reasons were 82 in number, the hon. gentlemen who sat below the gangway. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman spoke of autonomy. He said, "Would you not like autonomy?" What meaning could autonomy have in a country in which there were two races of different creeds, with different histories, and, unfortunately, hostile to one another? It meant that the majority would grind down and put under their feet the minority. (Cries of "No, no" and cheers.) Hon. gentlemen said, "No, no," but history supported what he said. They all knew what use the Nationalist members made of an advantage when they got it. They had seen that exemplified in the House of Commons. Those who lived in the country and knew its history were better able to anticipate what would happen under Home Rule than hon. members who had no more knowledge of Ireland than had been gained in passing visits. If Home Rule would be for the good of the country, why should not Ulster be the first to support it? (Hear, hear.) The ministers of the Presbyterian denomination were unanimously against the proposal ("No, no") and were filled with horror at it, although they had never enjoyed any ascendancy. One difference between 1886 and the present year was that the Bill of the former year was accompanied by a Land Bill, while now the Prime Minister mentioned the matter in a postscript and reserved the question to this Parliament for three years, during which time the Irish members

would claim to remain here in full force in order to prevent anything being done to get the land question out of the way. That meant that there was ultimately to be public plunder, simple robbery, for you could expect nothing else from members who said that landlords were entitled to nothing more than a single ticket from Dublin to Holyhead. Besides landlords, there were Protestant tenants who were being continually threatened that former occupiers would return and claim their own land (hear, hear); and these Protestant tenants were in a state of great alarm, for those who were immoral enough to plunder landlords were also immoral enough to plunder tenants. It was an insulting statement by the Chancellor of the Duchy that tenants were thinking more about the reduction of their rents than about Home Rule, for in the north of Ireland tenants regarded this measure with abhorrence and fear; and they were in a state of terror that had not existed in Ireland during this century. As to the Judges, questions were now put in this House with the object of bringing chagrin upon them; and what sort of men were the Judges likely to be when they were appointed by the hon. members around him? Was it likely that their police would be tolerated in Ulster at all? The proceedings in Committee-room No. 15 revealed the fact that present concessions were to be regarded as instalments only. The Meath election petitions had proved that clerical influence, most obnoxious to Ulster, was still supreme. The priests held that the treatment of heretics and education still came within the domain of morals; and it was shocking to hear with what cold-blooded indifference that statement was received by Radical members. If it was proposed to put under clerical power the people of South Edinburgh, the flight of the hon. member for that constituency would be meteoric. (Laughter.) If Nationalist members were inclined to save Ulster from it, they had no more power than the bubbles on a stream had to dam it. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Waterford should be the last man to talk of having no fear on this score after the treatment he and his party had received, which had been barbarous, cowardly, and mean. Language had been applied to them which had not been applied to any party before; and they appeared to have forgiven it in a Christian spirit, although they were now sensitive to what appeared in print about them. Their forgiveness could not be relied upon, particularly when hon. members had the appointment of Judges. In Canada it was found that the Roman Catholics so oppressed the minority of Protestants that Lord Dufferin was obliged to throw in the Protestant province of Ontario, and in that way, not to make a division, but to create a union, in order to maintain individual liberty. There was no parallel to be found in the whole of history for the treatment which the Government would inflict on Ulster by carrying this measure. Let hon. members, if they could, show a single case in history of a great nation being so mean as to hand over a small colony, which it had itself planted, to a hostile power? Everything possible had been done to slip through this Bill, and for this purpose even crime was being suppressed in Ireland, and that suppression was being carried out by persons who were as unfamiliar with the process as Satan was with the singing of Psalms. (Laughter and cheers.) It had been said that this Bill was a great and generous concession to Ireland, but that concession was a sacrifice made at the expense of the people of Ulster. He believed that if England could be induced—though he could not think it possible—to thus betray the people

of Ulster into the hands of those who were hostile to them, a people who had been faithful to her through many centuries, she would never again hold any fame or character among the nations of the world. (Cheers.) They could not forget the words of the hon. member for East Mayo—that “when they got the power in Ireland they would weigh out rewards and punishments,” nor the words of the hon. member for Cork county—that “when the power was in their hands they would deal with those gentry,” meaning the people of the north. Yet these were the men, who had never shown any tolerance towards their opponents, to whom the people of Ulster were to be handed over tied hand and foot. He ventured to say it would not be possible for any nation, however great, to survive such a betrayal with honour. (Cheers.)

Mr. AATHERLEY-JONES said that there could be but one feeling of satisfaction on both sides of the House at seeing the noble lord the member of Paddington once more in his place. No one who had listened to his brilliant speech could feel anything else but pleasure at seeing him once again from the front Opposition bench taking part in the debates of that House. (Hear, hear.) He did not intend to follow the noble lord through his speech, but there was one observation of the noble lord which he was bound to say filled him with some amazement. In endeavouring to establish his proposition that the Bill of the right hon. gentleman the leader of the House was a Bill tantamount to the repeal of the Union, the noble lord stated that the Act of Union was not, as argued by his right hon. friend the leader of the House a measure for securing the unity of the sovereignty, but a measure for securing the unity of Parliament. He respectfully submitted that his right hon. friend was literally accurate when he described it as a measure for securing the unity of the sovereignty. The Irish Parliament was a Parliament of co-ordinate jurisdiction and power with the British Parliament. It had the same power and control not only over domestic affairs, but over Imperial affairs. It was in all respects, he repeated, a Parliament of co-ordinate power, and the sovereignty was a sovereignty not of the Crown, but of the Imperial Parliament in conjunction with the Crown. The object of the Act of Union was that the Irish Parliament should cease to be a co-ordinate authority, and that Parliament should be a unified authority, the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. There had been a free expression of opinion on the Bill from all sections of the House excepting the Liberal section to which he belonged. In 1886 there was a free expression of opinion from the Liberal benches, and he believed that if opinions were expressed freely now the Government would be aided in their task. Speaking, not as a rebellious Liberal, but as an independent member of the Liberal party, he wished to put on record his respectful protest against the postponement of the solution of this great political difficulty for a further indefinite period. The question ought to be solved with the greatest expedition possible on lines that were likely to secure a permanent settlement. In creating a new Constitution for Ireland it was their duty to take care that their plan would not paralyze the administrative or legislative powers of the existing Constitution of Great Britain. In his opinion the time for discussing the expediency of Home Rule was passed. The right hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition, who had controlled Ireland for some years with courage and fortitude, had not brought the question any

nearer a satisfactory settlement. There were 81 substantial reasons on the benches opposite that rendered it impossible to settle this question by any other measure than one of Home Rule. The measure could not be defeated ultimately, and therefore it was the duty of the House to settle the matter in a spirit of moderation and mutual compromise. He held that by the proposed plan the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was absolutely secured. He admitted that the veto of the Lord Lieutenant on the advice of the Executive Committee of the Privy Council of Ireland was an illusory veto, but there was a really potential veto—namely, that which could be exercised on the advice of the Ministers representing the Imperial Parliament. That veto was sufficient to insure that no measure *intra vires* of the statutory Legislature would affect injuriously the interests of any class of her Majesty's Irish subjects. There were in addition other guarantees, for the Imperial Parliament retained control over the education of the people, over religious establishments, over customs, and over trade and navigation and other matters. One part of the Bill to which he objected was the provision that the land question should be reserved to the Imperial Parliament for three years. He believed that if the Irish people were to be trusted at all they ought to be trusted wholly, and that they would deal fairly and justly with the land question notwithstanding some indiscreet platform utterances. One of the chief reasons that had been put forward in support of the policy of Home Rule was the extreme desirability of settling the land question in an Irish Parliament. But there were also reasons affecting England against this plan of reservation. If the land question were reserved for three years the Imperial Parliament would for that time be occupied with Irish Bills, such as an evicted tenants Bill, a reduction of rents Bill, and a Bill for the extension of the Ashbourne Acts. It was because he believed in the policy of broad and generous trust in the Irish people that he was in favour of an attempt in Committee on the Bill to secure that the land question should not be reserved to the Imperial Parliament. As to the retention of the Irish members, he had never since 1886 hesitated to concur in what the First Lord of the Treasury had then stated on the subject, for he was satisfied that their retention must mean that there might be in domestic affairs a majority for the English Ministry, but in Imperial affairs a majority against them. He admitted that the Irish members were the arbiters of the destiny of the Government, but England had a reciprocal right to interfere in the affairs of Ireland, and could pass domestic legislation for that country. We might as well import into this House 80 French Deputies or 80 members of the Reichsrath as to permit 80 Irish members to have control over our affairs and to participate in our domestic affairs. (Opposition cheers.) He was glad that the leader had left this matter an open question (Opposition laughter), and he hoped that his views, which were the views of some of his fellow Liberals, might ultimately commend themselves to the wisdom of the House. There was a still greater danger and difficulty in the retention of the Irish members in that it was the first step, and a very long step, towards federation, for Scotch and Welsh members would clamour for the concession of Home Rule. (Opposition cheers.) He was in favour of Home Rule for Ireland because he believed it was an absolute political necessity; but he was strongly opposed to Home Rule for Scotland and Wales, for it was entirely uncongenial to the spirit of democracy. (Opposition laughter.) It

was necessary that the Irish members should have control over Imperial matters, but he thought it might be possible to formulate some scheme by which, in respect of any financial obligation, it might be possible to consult the Irish Parliament, and with the result of that consultation to arrive in the Imperial Parliament at a just and right conclusion. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. E. M'HUGH said the hon. members from Ulster opposed this Bill not from patriotic, but from selfish motives, for they had had everything that had been denied to the Catholics of Ulster, whom they oppressed. There was not in the world a more tolerant lot of men than the Catholic priests of Ireland, and in the south, where the Protestants were in a minority, no case had ever been brought forward in which they had acted in an intolerant or unjust manner. (Opposition laughter.) The Irish Unionists did not care a straw for the integrity of the Empire, but only for the integrity of the landlords (hear, hear), and their fear was that they would be treated in the same way as they had treated the Catholic minority in Ulster. (Hear, hear.) So far as the Catholics of Ulster were concerned the penal laws might never have been removed from the Statute-book, for they were in full force there. Although the Catholic population in Belfast was 70,000, the Catholics were practically excluded from the Poor Law board and the city council. The city council contained 40 elected members, not one of whom was a Catholic. There were 89 officials connected with the council, receiving salaries amounting to £17,000 a year, and only two were Catholics, and they were only scavengers. (Laughter.) In the petty sessions all the high officials were Protestants, and on the Asylum Board the balance had been redressed a little only lately by the present Chief Secretary. And yet the Tory members for Ulster talked of intolerance. (Cheers.) There was no part of the world where there was so much bigotry and intolerance as in Ulster. It was stated that Ulster was prosperous because she was Protestant. That was a fallacy. Ulster had always been the petted child of England, and while every effort was made to suppress the industries of the South of Ireland, no less than £1,600,000 was paid to Ulster to encourage her manufactures. The linen trade of Ulster did not happen to compete with any British trade; but the cotton trade did, and it was crushed out of existence. (Hear, hear.) The farmers of Ulster, moreover, had always had a tenant right, and had been able to sell the goodwill of their farms. It was urged that if Home Rule were passed all financial securities would depreciate. But previous to the Liberal Government coming into power the Irish Great Northern Railway stock was at 126, and now it was at 143. (Cheers.) The people of Ulster believed as firmly as the Nationalists that the Home Rule Bill would pass. (Cheers and cries of "Oh.") It would be a great step in righting the wrongs of centuries, and it would be viewed by the Irish people over the ocean even with greater satisfaction than by the people at home. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. W. KENNY said that as the representative of one of the five seats won from the Nationalists he wished to tell the House what the 4,600 Unionists who were his constituents thought of the Home Rule Bill. The St. Stephen's-green Division was one of these scattered constituencies outside Ulster who looked to the British people for protection against the Home Rule Bill, and which would call upon the House of Commons to stand

between them and the dangers which the Bill would inevitably produce. His constituency protested as strongly against the initial principle of Home Rule, and against every detail of the measure which was proposed, as Belfast, Londonderry, or any other part of Ulster. (Cheers.) The existence of a Unionist minority outside Ulster was a fact to be reckoned with. (Hear, hear.) It cannot be got rid of. (Hear, hear.) Unless the Imperial Parliament interfered in their behalf, the Irish loyalists would be left alone in the fight. The loyal minority in Ireland represented all the intelligence and the wealth of that country. ("Hear, hear," and Nationalist ironical cheers and laughter.) That was the way that the Irish loyalists were always treated by the Nationalist party—they were met not by arguments, but by taunts and jeers. (Hear, hear.) The constituency that he represented consisted chiefly of business men, of the largest merchants in Dublin—men of position and wealth. They had looked at this question most carefully; they had considered with attention the right hon. gentleman's Bill of 1886; they had weighed his statement of last Monday, and they remained unaltered in their determination to oppose this Bill with all their strength and with all their might. (Hear, hear.) They had looked upon this measure from the very practical point of view of how it would affect their position as traders, and they had come to the conclusion that it was fraught with the utmost danger to the commercial interests of their country. (Hear, hear.) The Unionists of Ireland were most anxious that this Home Rule question should be finally settled one way or the other, because the result of this agitation had been to largely interfere with trade, while it put a stop to beneficial legislation. They felt, however, that there was no element of finality in the right hon. gentleman's measure. (Hear, hear.) It proposed to permit agitation with regard to the Irish land question to continue unchecked for the next three years, and, in their view, the Bill would merely accentuate that agitation. The right hon. gentleman in the wonderful speech with which he charmed the House last Monday contrasted his policy of 1886 and of the present time with that of the late Government, and said that, while he offered Ireland a policy of autonomy, the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition had offered that country a policy of coercion only. In the first place coercion was merely the equivalent expression for a policy of the suppression of crime, but independently of such a policy her Majesty's late Government had undoubtedly introduced many measures which had largely conduced to the advancement and the prosperity of Ireland. ("Hear, hear," and Nationalist laughter.) The question was, Had Ireland prospered under the rule of the late Government? Under that Government the deposits in the Irish joint-stock banks had increased from £29,000,000 in 1885 to £345,532,000 in 1891, while the balances in the Irish Post Office Savings-bank had increased from £4,710,000 in 1885 to £5,932,000 in 1891. The Irish railway receipts, which were £2,751,000 in 1886, had risen to £3,146,000 in 1891. On the other hand, the number of paupers in Ireland, which was 633,000 in 1886, had fallen to 455,000 in 1890. These were practical tests that could properly be applied to show the improvement that had taken place in the condition of the country under a so-called coercion rule. (Hear, hear.) It was said that this improvement in the condition of the country was due to the anticipations that were entertained that Home Rule was about

to be obtained; but, on the contrary, the value of the stock of the various Irish banks and railways had fallen considerably between 1885 and 1886, when it was feared that a Home Rule Bill was about to be passed. Since the latter date, however, the value of those stocks had regained its former level, and why? Not because the people of the country believed that Home Rule was about to be given to them, but because the Irish Unionists had finally made up their minds that a Home Rule Bill would never be passed. ("Hear, hear," and Nationalist laughter.) Hon. gentlemen might laugh at that statement, but if they were only to ask the merchants in Ireland whether they expect that this Bill is about to be voted for by English members they would learn that, in the opinion of the merchants, such a thing was never likely to come to pass. The Prime Minister, in his introductory speech, complained that the late Government had made their so-called Coercion Act of 1887 permanent in some respects. He did not know whether the present Secretary of State for War, who was formerly Chief Secretary for Ireland, would join in that complaint, for he would remind that right hon. gentleman of the opinion he had expressed in October, 1885, that in certain parts of Ireland the ordinary jurymen could not be trusted to do their duty, mainly owing to the overbearing system of terror under the National League, and he said that in order to uphold the arm of justice in Ireland it was necessary to make the special jury clauses part of the permanent law of the land. Did he now join in the Prime Minister's complaint?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—The Crimes Act was not invented then, much less passed. (Irish cheers.)

Mr. W. KENNY remarked that the principle was the same. (Cheers.) But he supposed that the right hon. gentleman had now changed his opinions.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—Not in the least. Mr. W. KENNY said that in that case the right hon. gentleman, he supposed, did not join with the Prime Minister's complaint as to the permanency of certain clauses of the Crimes Act, 1887. Another member of the Cabinet, the present Secretary for Scotland, who had also formerly been Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, speaking at Galashiels in the year 1886, had stated that the Government had determined to maintain the law in Ireland, and with this object they proposed to make part of the permanent law, in Ireland as in Scotland, certain provisions as to trial by jury and change of venue. In face of those declarations by two members of the present Cabinet, were not the Unionists of Ireland fully justified in maintaining that these provisions in the Crimes Act of 1887 ought to remain upon the Statute-book as part of the permanent law of the land. He would now proceed to make a few remarks upon the proposals contained in the Bill itself. The country had expected that light would be thrown upon two essential particulars—first, as to the safeguarding of minorities; and, secondly, as to what system could be devised, except the federal system or complete repeal of the Union, to enable the Irish members to be retained at Westminster. In 1886 it was pointed out that there was no half-way house between these two propositions, if the Irish members were to be retained. The right hon. gentleman had to endeavour to effect that which the Unionists regarded as impossible—to reconcile what was wholly irreconcileable. The secret that had been so well kept was one that was scarcely worth keeping. If this mass of incongruity had been put

before the country at the general election the right hon. gentleman would never have obtained his present majority. He had endeavoured to consult the feelings of two parties—the gas and water party and that which was known as the Parnellite party. What were the safeguards that the right hon. gentleman proposed in the interests of the minority in Ireland? The right hon. gentleman seemed to have no confidence in the legislative body which he proposed to set up; for he proposed to keep from them for some years the appointment of Judges, the control of the police, and so on. Under the £20 franchise, he did not believe that in the Legislative Council the Unionists would command a number exceeding 14 or 15. (Nationalist cries of "Oh.") Therefore what protection would the minority get in the Legislative Council under the safeguard of the £20 franchise? It was said that a further safeguard would be the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament; but the 80 Irish members would turn the Government out of office for daring to apply the Imperial veto where the Lord Lieutenant had refused to apply it in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) The result of the absence of efficient safeguards would be that there would be absolutely no protection for minorities in Ireland, whether those minorities existed in Ulster or constituted part of the Catholic community throughout the rest of Ireland. The right hon. gentleman said the question of the retention of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament was a mere organic detail. They asserted, on the contrary, that it was not an organic detail, but an essential and vital principle of the Bill (cheers), and hon. gentlemen must understand that upon the second reading they would have to vote either for the retention or for the exclusion of the Irish members. (Hear, hear.) Were the Irish members to come there at intervals or to remain the whole Session? Were they to be about the House, to be called in whenever an Imperial matter arose, or were they to come there only at intervals—to be telegraphed for whenever an Imperial question arose? (Hear, hear.) Did hon. gentlemen expect that there was to be any finality about this measure? In his opinion the Bill would really be the lever and the basis for further agitation in the Imperial Parliament. The first proposal that would be made within a very short time if this Bill passed would be directed to whittle away a large proportion of the Customs revenue of £2,370,000. The Irish members would then find the two Exchequer Judges in Dublin an intolerable nuisance, and they would get rid of them, election petitions being at the same time transferred to Judges of their own appointment; and finally, there would be an agitation in that House, to allow Ireland to have a distinctive trade policy of her own. (Hear, hear.) He had no doubt that in a very short time a scheme would be submitted which would permit the Irish Legislature to impose protective duties and offer bounties in Ireland. From conversations which he had had with Gladstonian friends in Ireland he gathered that they favoured Home Rule because of the protection which could be extended to Irish industries and of the bounties which could be offered to them. There were two questions as to which he should like to receive some information. One was the question of appeals from Ireland. The House had not been told whether there would be a provision in the Bill for the retention of the House of Lords as the final Court of Appeal in civil matters in Ireland, or what was to be the final Court of Appeal. He should also like to know whether the Irish Executive was to have the power of releasing prisoners like the Phoenix Park

conspiracy prisoners now in Irish gaols. He referred to a letter written in December last by the hon. member for Cardiff in which it was pointed out that the recent change of Government had been effected by the Irish votes, and that the Government owed its existence to Irish votes and was dependent on them. He appealed to hon. members who agreed with the view of the hon. member for Cardiff, and with those who believed that the Irish members were in fact the masters of the Prime Minister, to think twice before they imposed such a measure as this on Irish Unionists. (Cheers.)

Mr. LABOUCHERE said the hon. member had told the House that he represented a body of men possessing exceptional intelligence and wealth. (Laughter.) That might possibly be the case, but it did not follow that because one man was wiser and richer than another that he counted for two. The hon. member also said that he represented 4,600 constituents, but he found in "Dad" that the hon. member was elected by 2,878 votes, and that against him were 3,488 of the non-intelligent and non-rich. (Laughter.)

Mr. W. KENNY said the hon. member was looking at the register of last year. The register had slightly improved since then. ("Oh, oh," and laughter.) Now the majority in his favour was 781.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said that he preferred to look at the election figures and not at vague facts about the register. The hon. member had treated the House to a great deal of finance. It was a remarkable fact that in 1885 the House was told that Home Rule would ruin Ireland, and the proof was that the public securities had gone down. They were now told that Home Rule would ruin Ireland because the public securities had gone up. (Laughter.) The hon. member also pointed out as one of the advantages which had followed the Irish Administration of the late Government that the balances in the savings banks had increased. But the hon. member did not appear to know that on account of certain Land Acts opposed by the Tories the money which used to go into the pockets of the landlords now went into the savings banks. (Cheers.) He thought that the House was glad once again to hear the voice of the noble lord the member for South Paddington. (Cheers.) Owing, however, to no fault of the noble lord's, he thought that much had not been added to the stock of arguments already brought forward on both sides. ("Oh, oh," and cheers.) The noble lord was perpetually saying, "I want to know whether this or that is in the Bill?" Considering that the Bill would be in print on Saturday, it seemed to him to be more reasonable to wait until it was before them before endeavouring to extract information on points of detail from Ministers with regard to it. But he understood that the noble lord was utterly opposed in principle to any scheme of Home Rule. (Lord R. Churchill assented.) That being so, his criticism appeared to be deprived of a good deal of its value. But he thought the noble lord would recognize that in whatever Bill the principles of Home Rule might have been embodied the mode in which that Home Rule was intended to be carried out in Ireland would have met with criticisms not only from him but from others who agreed with him. Of course this was a most complicated matter; it was very much like trying to put a square peg into a round hole. (Opposition cheers.) The angles of the peg would remain; they could not get a fit theoretically perfect, but their great object should be to get the best fit that was possible under the circumstances. The noble lord told the House of many dangers that would accrue to the Empire if Home Rule were

granted ; but they might prevent every species of reform by exaggerating dangers. He had never heard a great reform advocated without being told that it would utterly submerge and destroy the Empire, and he had not yet known any of these prognostications being fulfilled when the reform had been passed. He thought this Bill, assuming that it was desirable to give effect to the principle of Home Rule, was a great effort of legislative art on the part of the Prime Minister and his colleagues. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman had fully recognized the difficulties and had dealt with them in the most successful manner. It must be remembered that they had to choose between two alternatives. When the last Bill was before the House the Unionists told them that there was a third course—some species of local government for Ireland ; but that course had entirely disappeared. (Cries of "No.") The noble lord made a great point of the fact that, whereas the Liberals had a majority in the United Kingdom, the majority in England was opposed to Home Rule. But surely that was a strange argument for a Unionist to use. He had been under the impression that the Unionists held that there was to be no distinction in the Imperial Parliament. The noble lord seemed to think that the entire country had not decided at the late election in favour of Home Rule. Would he point out one member on the Liberal side who had shirked the question ? It was true that other issues were put forward, but that was the case at every election. If they had the Referendum they could ask the country to decide solely on Home Rule, but so long as they had the present system they must submit a variety of issues to the people. The Liberals had a majority, and if ever a majority had a mandate from the country he asserted that the present majority had that mandate. (Laughter.) The noble lord had tried to frighten them about Ulster. It was not the first time he had tried to frighten them about Ulster. The noble lord told them that he knew from his personal experience that Ulster would fight. But surely his personal experience was limited to the fact that the Ulster people said that they would fight, and that they knew was a very different thing. (Cheers.) He thought that the people of Ulster would as soon as there was a Parliament in Ireland rally almost unanimously to that Parliament. (Cheers and cries of "No.") He had not been in Ulster himself (hear, hear), but so far as he could understand the position, the farmers there were up in arms against judicial rents. (Laughter.) When these Ulster farmers found that there was an Irish Parliament ready to do them justice with regard to their landlords, they would soon desert Lord Londonderry and his friends and rally to the Parliament which would give them security. Then the noble lord the member for Paddington told the House that it had no right to call on the people of Ulster to change their allegiance. Surely they had already changed their allegiance ? They changed it when the Union was carried. Before that they owed it to the Irish Parliament. The Bill would enable them to revert to their original allegiance. Did hon. members on the Opposition side suggest that Ulster should be left out of the Irish Parliament ? ("No.") What did it amount to ? All Ireland, except a portion of Ulster, was in favour of Home Rule. The majority of the United Kingdom was in favour of Home Rule, and were these Ulster people to impose their veto on the verdict of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) That would be Ulster rule with a vengeance. They were not to do justice simply because Ulster was opposed to it. (An hon.

member.—Half of Ulster.) Yes. In the last Parliament the majority from Ulster was in favour of Home Rule, in the present Parliament the majority was slightly against it ; in the next Parliament, very likely, the majority would be largely in favour of it. He ridiculed the terrors of the noble lord the member for Paddington, and, proceeding, he declared that he regarded the Bill as a very good Bill ; a very good basis to go into Committee upon (ironical laughter), because a great deal was left open to the Committee. The Government asked to be assisted by the House. For his part he tendered his services. (Loud laughter.) The Bill in the main was a thoroughly good Bill. He was not going to pin himself down to all the details. He was in favour of one chamber, but if there were to be two he was in favour of both being elected on the same franchise, with a difference only in areas. Then if the Irish were fit to look after the land in three years he could not see why they should not look after it now. He suspected they wanted to get some more English money. No Government would venture to propose any more land purchase Bills. (Hear, hear.) What they wanted was a Commission for the revision of judicial rents. They had heard a reference to the Argentine Republic, but surely there was some difference between that and the United Kingdom. With regard to the position of the Irish members at Westminster, that question would, no doubt, be raised in Committee. He entirely agreed with the First Lord of the Treasury that his scheme was not a very good one (laughter), and it would be infinitely better to exclude the Irish members under certain limitations entirely. He did not make these criticisms in any hostile spirit to the Bill. They were fair subject for discussion in Committee, and he thought the decision of the Committee ought to be accepted by all Home Rulers. (Ironical Opposition cheers.) He should always accept those decisions, whether they were for or against him. (Opposition cheers.) It was of paramount importance that a Home Rule Bill should be passed as soon as possible. The noble lord the member for Paddington tried to terrify them about the House of Lords. He told them the House of Lords was going to defend the liberties of England by acting counter to the will of the people. He had never understood why 500 or 600 gentlemen should be allowed to interfere with the decisions of the representatives of the people, and, if they did, he thought they would find that there was sufficient force in the democracy to put an end to their existence. It was perfectly monstrous that the decision of the House of Commons should not be recognized and accepted by the House of Lords. That would be admitted on all sides. (Opposition laughter.) In the meantime, he would suggest to the Prime Minister, if the Lords threw out the Bill, that he should throw over some of the Estimates to an autumn Session and tack Home Rule on to the Appropriation Bill. (Laughter.) That, he thought, was a simple solution of the difficulty. He would assure the Government that, no matter what course they took against the action of the House of Lords, they would be supported by the entire democracy of the country. (Hear, hear.) He thought the Bill was a good Bill, though it might with advantage receive certain modifications in Committee. The Radicals throughout the country would recognize that the Bill dealt with the difficulty in regard to Ireland efficiently, and would give it their cordial support. (Cheers.)

'COLONEL WARING was sure that his hon. and amusing friend who had just sat down would not

expect him to follow his speech in detail. His hon. friend boldly begged the whole question, and proceeded to argue upon it, in assuming that a Home Rule Bill was desirable. The hon. gentleman said it was remarkable that Irish securities had not fallen as they did in 1886. They had not fallen, for the very simple reason that financial men in Ireland had not the slightest belief of the ability, and perhaps the desire, of the Government to pass the Bill. (Cheers.) It was said that no Liberal candidate had shirked the question of Home Rule at the general election. He did not say that they did, but he was certain that, if they did not shirk it, each described it in such terms as he thought would suit the audience he was addressing; and no two candidates put it forward in exactly the same light and exactly the same form. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend asked what Ulstermen wanted. They wanted to be let alone. (Cheers.) When he spoke of Ulster, he meant political and not geographical Ulster. It seemed to be forgotten that the House of Lords was a part of the British Constitution, and the House of Commons had no more power to abolish it than the House of Lords had to abolish the House of Commons. The Prime Minister said the Irish members had been mute during the last seven years; but had they told their constituents they had been mute? If they had been mute, the newspapers had displayed a wonderfully fertile invention. Did Scotch members consider that Scotland was degraded by the Union? If they did, they had never said so. If Ireland had not equality of laws with Great Britain, the inequality had been in favour of Ireland, and England and Scotland might well wish to suffer from similar inequality. Clergymen of the Church of England could not sit in this House, presumably because they were represented by the Bishops in the House of Lords; and by the 10th of George IV. a priest of the Church of Rome was incapable of sitting in the House of Commons. Would a similar disability apply to priests in the Irish House of Commons? The Irish Parliament would be under the control of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Would it be possible for Archbishop Walsh and Bishop Nulty to occupy in the Irish House positions analogous to those of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this House? The Prime Minister said that Ulster had changed its opinion about Home Rule since the Union. It had changed its opinion once in a century; but how often had the right hon. gentleman changed his opinions in half a century? In 1836 the right hon. gentleman supported the Established Church in Ireland, and said that English Protestants ought to maintain the Protestant religion there. Now he proposed to put the Protestants of Ireland under the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The right hon. gentleman said that England was not to be driven from Home Rule by menaces; and Ulster would not be converted to it by menaces whether expressed or implied. The right hon. gentleman certainly spoke of the Irish Parliament having separate and independent power like other Legislatures of the Empire; and it was rather difficult to reconcile that position with other parts of his speech. The right hon. gentleman said the settlement was to be a real one; but how long was it to last? A generation? No; in 15 years it was to be open to revision. That was a pitfall and a snare. Then, again, as to the two Chambers and their proposed constitution, he contended that with the proportion of representation that would be in operation no more protection would be given to the minority than if there was one Chamber only. (Hear, hear.) The people of Ulster had

always regarded Home Rule as Rome Rule, and the election petitions in Meath had amply demonstrated that they were right in this view. Ulster disregarded equally the threats, curses, and blessings of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Nationalists, but at the same time those threats and curses were calculated to give the people of Ulster little confidence in the fair and tolerant treatment they would receive from a Parliament in Dublin under the domination of those so hostile to them. As the Ulster people and members rejected the Bill of 1886 with its so-called safeguards, so they would unite with all their power to reject the present Bill, which was shorn of all safeguards for the minority. (Cheers.) He asked the Secretary of State for War to inform the House whether or not the military in Ireland would be under the control of the Irish Parliament or the Lord Lieutenant, who would be directed by his responsible Ministers in Ireland. This Parliament would be a Roman Catholic Parliament dominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and yet English Radicals, sons of British freemen, proposed to commit the loyalists of Ireland to a tyranny which they themselves would never for a moment submit to! (Cheers.) Would they submit to be governed by a Parliament under the dictation of any Archbishop, Pope, or ecclesiastic whatever? He felt very much inclined to apply to those who supported the right hon. member for Mid Lothian the Scriptural denunciation:—“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” (Laughter.) This yoke, which their fathers broke 200 years ago, was one to which the loyalists would never bow their necks. Their protests, which right hon. gentlemen opposite were pleased to call idle words, were, in truth, the first murmurings of a storm which would drive them and their party on the lee shore of indelible infamy. (Cheers.)

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—There may be some members of the House, and I am among the number, who think that this debate is somewhat of a contravention of the ordinary practice of the House of Commons. (Hear, hear.) But I think we need not regret, at all events, the time which has been spent upon the subject to-night, because we have listened to one or two most remarkable speeches. We heard a speech from an hon. member below the gangway who is himself a merchant in Belfast, and who, therefore, from the very heart and core of loyal Ulster, was able to give a strong adhesion to the principle of the Bill. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, we heard a very lively speech from the hon. member for Londonderry opposing the Bill upon a pure and simple Home Rule argument. For what did he say? He said, pointing with an air of scorn to these benches, “What do you know of Ireland? What business have you to legislate for Ireland? It is we who know Ireland and not you.” That is the very reason why we advocate Home Rule. (Cheers.) Then we had a very long speech from the member for the St. Stephen’s-green Division, and as he made reference to me and quoted some expressions of mine I will let him into a secret and will make him an offer. The secret is this—the particular position which when Chief Secretary for Ireland and up to this day I have always held is that what would have more effect than any other thing in obtaining in a right and proper manner verdicts from jurors would be the adoption of the ordinary common-sense Scotch practice of allowing juries to return a verdict by a majority.

(Hear, hear.) I only regret that I have never met an English or Irish lawyer who did not look upon that as rank heresy. (A laugh.) The hon. and learned gentleman referred also to certain provisions in the Bill of last year which he said were similar to what was to be found in the Scotch law. There is, I admit, a bastard resemblance. (Hear, hear.) Well, the offer I will make the hon. and learned gentleman is that if he will apply the Scotch law in its entirety I will give him my hearty support. (Hear, hear.) Then we have had a lively speech from the hon. member for Northampton, whose inaccuracy and candour as well as the sweet reasonableness which distinguishes his character we all admire. (Laughter.) My hon. friend gave a cordial and loyal support to the Bill. But, chiefly, we have had the speech of the noble lord the member for Paddington, which came as a refreshing influence upon us, and as we listened to a somewhat dreary debate we rejoiced to hear the noble lord's voice again in the House. I have called the noble lord's speech "refreshing," because he speaks with a certain show of authority on the Opposition benches, though we are not quite sure how far that authority extends. He was the first member who interposed in the debate who has been able to oppose the measure and state his reasons for opposing it without proceeding to traduce the character and malign the motives of the Irish members. (Cheers.) That is what we expected from the noble lord. We had reason to know, or to suspect, in the last Parliament, that the noble lord gave only a chastened approval to—perhaps he regarded with some positive dislike—a great deal of the policy of the then Irish Secretary.

LORD R. CHURCHILL expressed dissent.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—Well, we had the suspicion, then. (Hear, hear.) I was going to say that he made very few open signs. The noble lord was able during those years wonderfully to curb his natural impetuosity, though he occasionally indited a vigorous letter to *The Times*. (Hear, hear.) I do not, however, remember any occasion in which he allowed himself to go into the division lobby, but we all had the idea that he was more or less a dissenting party. At all events, the noble lord has this to say—that he has never been one who has founded his opinion upon that unworthy distrust of the Irish people to which I have alluded, and he was able to criticize this and other measures without founding himself in the smallest degree upon a depreciation of that people. (Cheers.) I have often asked myself in the course of this debate and of others what would be my feeling as a Scotchman if I sat here and listened to the things said of my countrymen and my country which Irish members have been obliged to listen to when said of their country and of themselves, especially if those things were said by Scotchmen. (Cheers.) What should I have said if I had seen Englishmen after Englishman—and, thank goodness, I have never seen them—getting up and priding themselves on knowing all about Scotland, all their knowledge being founded upon a summer holiday tour in the Highlands? (Hear, hear.) What should we say if in such circumstances a tendency to every sort of mischief were imputed to us? Did the right hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition think that he was assisting in the promotion of good feeling between the two countries under any conceivable system of government when he rose the other night and went through the whole gamut of misconduct and mischief which an Irish Executive could commit and called for safeguards against them? His argument implied that if the Irish Legislature and Executive were not checked

they would tyrannize over the constabulary, degrade the Judges, ruin the Civil service, and plunder the landlords. (Opposition cheers.) "Hear, hear" cry hon. members who are simple enough to be led by wild language into a belief that these things are likely to happen.

MR. BALFOUR.—I did not so much prophesy about the future as quote the past. (Cheers and laughter.)

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—As to plundering the landlords, have they not been plundered in the past, and, if they have been subjected to plunder, who was responsible? Not hon. members below the gangway opposite. (Cries of "Yes," and Nationalist cheers.) What power had they to do it? No, this Imperial House of Commons was responsible (Nationalist cheers), and who has been the most recent and the most extreme contributor to that process of plunder but the right hon. gentleman himself?

MR. BALFOUR.—I do not rise to argue the point, but I wish to say that the right hon. gentleman has misinterpreted my interruption and my speech. What I alluded to was not the action of Parliament, but the speeches and threats of Irish representatives; and my argument was that when those same gentlemen had the power to carry out their threats they might be trusted to do so. (Cheers.)

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—Well, if this is the measure of the commonsense and statesmanship and knowledge of the world of the right hon. gentleman, I am very much disappointed, because he ought to know that the exaggerated language sometimes used in days of stress and strife and turmoil by excited politicians in Ireland is no proof of any definite purpose. (Opposition cries of "Oh," and laughter.) At any rate, our argument as opposed to the right hon. gentleman's assertion is this—that the best preventive of excited language and extreme action is to invest the Irish people with a degree of public responsibility. (Hear, hear.) Does the right hon. gentleman not see that, in bringing these strong accusations against three-fourths or four-fifths of the Irish people, he really uses an argument that recoils upon himself, because, if the Irish people were really so incapable of governing and controlling themselves as he supposes, we should have in that fact a proof of the lamentable condition into which a generous nation had been allowed to lapse under the right hon. gentleman's system of government, and of the necessity for a drastic reform! If I am asked why, as we have no share in these unworthy fears, we have inserted certain safeguards in the Bill, why we prescribe certain conditions as to the Bench, the Civil Service, the constabulary, and the land question, my answer is that we have to do our best to assuage the fears of innocent people who actually take in a serious sense the wild words that are sometimes uttered. We have also in a smaller degree to guard against what I believe to be a small danger that this sort of talk may lead to a spirit of recrimination, and that the possession of these powers may goad some people in Ireland into a less quiet attitude. Any one accustomed to the forms of this House who happened to come into the gallery during this debate would, I think, be puzzled to make out what stage we were at. This is a motion for the introduction of the Bill. The question before the House then is, Is this a subject upon which legislation is required? On the second reading we come to the question whether the general scheme is a good one, and in Committee we have the details. This debate, however, is occupied almost entirely with the details of the measure. (Hear, hear.) There was indeed, as we might expect, one outspoken

utterance by the hon. and gallant member for North Armagh, who said openly and honestly to us, "I do not care a straw for the details of the Bill; it is the thing itself that I object to." (Opposition cheers.) The fact that we are discussing the details is not surprising, because the main question of this policy has been discussed and rediscussed in this House and in the country until there is nothing more to be said about it. We have dinned into the public ear, on the platform, from this House, and by every other means, our object, which was to establish in Ireland for Irish purposes a legislative body and an Executive dependent upon it. (Hear, hear.) That was known to every one except one person, the right hon. member for Bordesley. (Ministerial laughter.) He said in his speech the other night that he was taken completely by surprise. (Loud laughter.) He was good-natured enough to suggest that as he was so taken by surprise it would be a very proper thing for the Government to advise her Majesty to dissolve Parliament in order that the country might be better informed, upon the supposition that everybody was as ignorant as himself. It is quite in the right hon. gentleman's power to redeem his position. He has only to go to his constituents, and he would be much more certain how he stood. (Laughter and cheers.) We have heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that an applicant for the Chiltern Hundreds is subject to no inquiry into character. (Loud laughter.) Therefore any little political difference would not stand in his way for a moment; and if, as may be, some of the little section of politicians with whom he acts are in the same category, they might each in succession make the same application for the Chiltern Hundreds (laughter), and then we should have not only the advantage of comparing their position, but also we should have an illustrative light thrown upon public opinion in the country in a series of bye-elections. (Laughter and cheers.) I was astonished when the right hon. gentleman went on further and said he was not contented with the constituencies in this country, and took a leaf out of the book of the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition, who started the somewhat extraordinary theory not many months ago of eliminating from each constituency, in estimating the real value of its votes, every voter who was not born in that part of the kingdom. (Laughter and cheers.) The President of the Local Government Board is going to bring in a Registration Bill, and he has only to move a provision to the effect that on the register every person's place of birth should be recorded, and that no one's vote shall be counted who does not vote in the country in which he was born, and the whole of his object will be accomplished. (Cheers.) To such strange shifts are they brought that they try to explain away their straightforward defeat before the tribunal of public opinion. (Cheers.) I turn to that portion of the Bill which has a most direct interest for us members of Parliament—namely, that which proposes that the Irish members should remain here and that public business should be in some manner or other divided. The House will remember that in 1886 there was a temporary exclusion of the Irish members. If I remember aright there were two important reasons given for excluding them; in the first place, the fact of certain complications to which I shall refer presently, and, in the second place, it was urged that there would be a difficulty on the part of Ireland in—if I may use a sporting phrase—furnishing two teams, one for Ireland and one for England.

That particular argument was urged by Mr. Parnell, and I am sure that no one could deal with this question at all without having the most respectful memory of the statesmanlike intuitions and almost genius of that departed public man. (Parnellite cheers.) Now the Government have determined to include and not exclude the Irish members. I see that there is a report going about that this is a matter of comparative indifference to the Government. That is not the view of the case which I take at all. The Bill provides for the inclusion of the Irish members unmistakably, and I think most rightly and necessarily. (Cheers.) The noble lord, repeating very much the sentiments he expressed in 1886, talked of this Bill as pure and simple repeal. How can it be, when the Irish members are retained in the Imperial Parliament? His observation had some force in 1886, but it is lost now. Speaking as a Scotchman, I must say that if there were any similar proposal at any time for Scotland, I should object to having my country excluded from its full representation in the management of Imperial affairs here. (Cheers.) The complications of which I spoke remain however. They were amply explained in 1886. They are obvious to every one with the slightest knowledge of the facts. The alternatives are either that the Irish members should be here and vote on all subjects, or that business should be divided; and both plans present grave difficulties. Nothing has been urged in this debate which could fail to have been fully before the eyes of any one who has been considering this matter for the last six years. When the Prime Minister was speaking, I was a pretty close observer of the countenances of hon. and right hon. gentlemen opposite, and I observed that when, after the Prime Minister's elaborate exposition of the difficulties in either case, he finally pronounced in favour of the division of business those hon. and right hon. faces increased considerably in length. (Laughter and cheers.) So we see very clearly that there was a double bolt forged against us to be discharged at the beginning of this Parliament. We were a weak Government (hear, hear), in a weak position (cheers), with a divided and dwindling majority both in the House and the country. (Nationalist cheers.) I will not say how far those anticipations have been realized. (Laughter.) But of all the barrels of this many-barrelled blunderbuss which was to be levelled against us—and I adopt that weapon because of the peculiar aptness of the name (laughter and cheers)—the two most damaging barrels were these—first, there was the dastardly conduct of the Home Secretary in letting loose upon society two dynamiters of the worst description; and before Parliament met it was discovered that this crime was enacted upon society with the consent and cognizance of the late Government. (Hear, hear.) Then there was the intolerable injustice of allowing the Irish members to come here and vote down English and Scotch members. What a disappointment it was then when it turned out that that was not the proposal which the Prime Minister had accepted. (Cheers.) I venture to surmise that the hon. and learned gentleman who made so brilliant a speech in following the Prime Minister came down to the House with two speeches in his pocket (cheers and laughter), one of which would show the insufferable injustice of keeping the Irish members here, and the other of which would show the ludicrous anomalies of dividing business. (Laughter.) The noble lord opposite spoke of the provisions in the Bill for the division of business as "a dexterous arrangement." It must be remembered, however,

that the method proposed for the division of the work affects not the principle but the mere machinery and form of legislative work. (Hear, hear.) I am by no means indifferent to the forms of this House which have come down to us as the result of long experience, but after all they are but forms and methods, they are mere machinery, and if they in any way hamper and fetter us in adopting any important and necessary change we ought not to allow ourselves to be tied and bound by them. Surely the House of Commons will not allow itself to be nonplussed by a difficulty which would meet with a ready solution at the hands of any town or county council. (Hear, hear.) Coming to the question of the Constitution proposed to be given to Ireland by this Bill, I may say that our object has been to create an effective legislature having the most ample powers over Irish business, and that in order to meet the fears to which I have already alluded we propose to create also for the protection of minorities a second chamber. We have heard within the last day or two comments upon our proposals from certain quarters. Thus a noble duke has given us his notion of what the supremacy of an Imperial Parliament means. I give the House that opinion in order that I may at once repudiate it. (Hear, hear.) The noble duke, when speaking of the maintenance of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, said, "When we speak of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament what we had in our minds was the practical, continual, and constant control by Parliament over legislation, and if need be over administration in all parts of the United Kingdom." If that were so how would Parliament be relieved and how would Ireland be advantaged by the passing of this Bill. (Cheers and counter cheers.) If the Imperial Parliament were to be always supervising, nagging, and interfering with the affairs of Ireland it would be better a hundred times that we should let things alone. (Cheers and counter cheers.) It is sufficient if provision is made to prevent an excessive and abusive use of the power that is conferred, and if it were found that that power was continually and seriously misused it would always remain in the Imperial Parliament to resume the power which it had conferred. The noble lord asked me some definite questions which I will endeavour to answer. The proposals for the protection of religious and educational freedom will be very much the same as in the Bill of 1886, and there will also be the American provision for dealing with personal freedom. As the noble lord has curbed his impatience for two years he can curb it for two days longer, when he will be able to study these provisions in the Bill itself. The noble lord asks other questions, which I will not now stop to answer in detail, but I may say that if the insufficiency of any of the provisions in the Bill relating to these is made apparent to us, we shall be glad to alter them as may seem necessary. The hon. and gallant member who last spoke inquired who is to command the troops? Was it ever expected that they should be altered from the position they now stand in? The position of the troops and Militia will remain just as at present. They will continue under the supreme control of the Commander-in-Chief, under the Queen. I have noted some points as to Ulster, but I will not stop to deal with them, nor with the financial questions, which will be better understood when the Bill is in the hands of hon. members. The excuse for prolonging this debate is that, having committed a similar contravention in 1886, the Opposition have thus established a precedent which it was desirable

for them to follow in 1893. We make, however, no complaint of any amount of criticism. The plain object of the measure is to secure relief for Ireland. We are confident that the more it is criticized and discussed the more will the main features of the scheme commend themselves to the common sense of the country as a safe and reasonable plan for the accomplishment of an honourable purpose. (Ministerial cheers.)

Upon the motion of Mr. ANSTRUTHER, the debate stood adjourned until to-morrow.

POST OFFICE (ACQUISITION OF SITES) BILL.

Mr. A. MORLEY moved the second reading of this Bill, and, in answer to Mr. TOMLINSON, said that it was limited to the three places named in the Bill. There would be no opposition by the owners of the premises which they sought to acquire.

The Bill was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee.

BUILDING SOCIETIES (No. 2) BILL.

Mr. ASQUITH, in moving that this Bill be now read a second time, said that if this course were adopted he suggested that the Committee to which it would be referred should also consider, at the same time, the other Bills dealing with the same matter which were before the House, and that the Committee should have power to examine experts upon the subject.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH hoped the Bill would be read a second time.

Mr. ASQUITH promised that the Government would do all they could to secure the second reading of the other Bills on the subject.

Mr. BARTLEY and the MARQUIS of CARMARTHEN objected to the Bill being proceeded with in the absence of discussion, and it was put down for Monday.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (VOTING AND QUALIFICATION) BILL.

On the question that the House resolve itself into Committee on this Bill,

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH raised a point of order. He said that he had given notice of an instruction to the Committee on this Bill, and he wished to ask whether, under Standing Order 51, the House could resolve itself into Committee at this stage after such notice had been given.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY said that the word "notice" in the rule meant a notice on the paper. (Hear, hear.)

The SPEAKER said that when Committee was called he was bound to leave the chair, and the House was obliged to resolve itself at once into Committee unless notice had been given; and this notice must appear on the paper.

The House went into Committee.

On clause 1,

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH moved to report progress. As the Government had undertaken to bring in a measure he suggested that the further progress of this Bill should be deferred until the Government Bill was brought in and the whole question fully considered.

Mr. H. FOWLER said that no doubt the object of his hon. friends in getting the Bill into committee was to secure the taking up of the Bill under the Whitsun-tide order. He hoped to be able to submit a Bill before this measure got much further, and then the right hon. gentleman would be able to raise the whole question in which he was interested.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY suggested that this was

eminently a question for consideration in the Grand Committee on Law.

Progress was reported.

TRADE UNION PROVIDENT FUND BILL.

Mr. HOWELL moved the second reading of this Bill, and explained that it applied only to the cases of certain societies which had laid by a nest egg for old age pensions and provident purposes.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH and Mr. J. LOWTHER stated that their objections to the measure had been satisfied.

The Bill was read a second time.

NEW BILLS.

Mr. LAWRENCE brought in a Bill to enable School Boards to provide for the superannuation of their officers.

Mr. ASQUITH brought in a Bill to amend the law relating to conspiracy and breach of the peace.

Both Bills were read a first time.

THE TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE.

Mr. T. HEALY gave notice that on an early day he would move the repeal of the 12 o'clock rule.

The House adjourned at 25 minutes to 1.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

Mr. ASQUITH,—On Thursday next, to move for leave to introduce a Bill with reference to the Church in Wales. The motion to be put down as first order of the day.

Mr. GARDNER,—On Monday next, to move that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the extent and nature of the probable causes of the depression now and recently prevailing in various branches of agriculture, and whether that depression can be alleviated by legislation or other measures.

Mr. F. STEVENSON,—On this day four weeks, to call attention to the incidence of the land tax on small properties, and to move a resolution.

Mr. MACDONALD,—On this day four weeks, to call attention to the administration of the Post Office, and to move a resolution.

Mr. BAYLEY,—On this day four weeks, to call attention to the lifeboat service, and to move a resolution.

THE ARMING OF THE TROOPS IN EGYPT.

In answer to Mr. BROOKFIELD,

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said,—With the exception of one battalion on its way home from India, which is not intended to remain in Egypt and which has the Martini-Henry rifle, all the infantry serving in Egypt have the Lee-Metford magazine rifle. There is an ample supply of ammunition of both descriptions in Egypt.

COLLECTION OF INCOME-TAX.

In answer to SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND,

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said,—No special instructions whatever have been issued to collectors of income-tax with regard to the payment of the duty for the current year. The tax, however, is by law due and payable on or before January 1, and I cannot interfere with the collectors in the discharge of their legal duties.

PUBLIC WORKS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

In answer to Mr. WEIR,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—The Scotch Office have allotted £3,000 to be spent in roads and path-

ways at once in the Lewis and on the mainland. They have advanced the Carloway Harbour and the Carloway-road to the point at which the local authorities and the contractors, if they agree, can take the work in hand at once. The local authority, and not the Scotch Office, is responsible for carrying forward the works when once they are finally sanctioned. There is plenty of work for the people of the Lewis if these undertakings are set going.

BRITISH MATERIAL IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether he was in a position to contradict the statements current in the trade that the "Post Office Guide" was printed on paper made in Germany, and that large consignments thereof arrived weekly in London on account of her Majesty's Government: and, in the contrary case, whether, having regard to the necessity of finding employment for the workless industrial population of the United Kingdom, any stipulation was imposed upon contractors that the materials supplied at the cost of the public revenue should be, whenever practicable, produced within Great Britain or Ireland.

SIR J. HIBBERT.—I am not in a position to say whether the particular paper used for the "Post Office Guide" may or may not have been manufactured in Germany. It is supplied to the printer from the general stores of the Stationery Office. No contracts for paper or any other stores purchased by the Stationery Office are given to firms outside the United Kingdom. There is no condition in any of the contracts requiring that the articles contracted for shall be made in the United Kingdom, nor has any direction or authority been given to the Stationery Office, either by the Government or by Parliament, to limit purchases of articles made in the United Kingdom.

CONVICT ASSISTANT-WARDERS.

In answer to Mr. LAWRENCE,

Mr. ASQUITH said,—In consequence of a block of promotion by reason of the diminution in the number of convicts, assistant-warders in the convict prisons have been allowed, after ten years' service as assistant-warders, a rise of salary by annual increments of 30s. for three more years, thus reaching a maximum which is £3 10s. above the minimum pay of a warder. In local prisons the flow of promotion has been more rapid, but, independently of this, the addition made to the pay of assistant-warders in the local prisons exceeds what has been given in the convict prisons. There has been an addition of £3 to the maximum without any condition as to excessive length of service, and, further, they have been given from their first appointment a house rent free, or an allowance in lieu of house.

RULES OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

In reply to Mr. T. G. BOWLES,

Mr. MUNDELLA said,—I am aware that certain objections have been raised by some shipowners' societies to the adoption of the new rules of the road at sea recommended at the Washington International Conference. These objections were carefully considered by the Rule of the Road Committee, and the views of that committee were laid before Parliament by my predecessor in 1891. I have already expressed my readiness to receive any observations on the subject.

LIGHT DUES.

Mr. WEIR asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the department would refund the sum of £9 7s. 3d., paid under protest for light dues by the

agent for the owners of the steamer *Ixia*, of North Shields, which, during a long and very stormy voyage from Baltimore to Kiel, put into Stornoway on December 29 last, when the captain purchased fresh provisions for the crew at a cost of £6. Light dues to the amount mentioned were demanded, although the vessel discharged no cargo, took none on board, and sailed from the harbour on her voyage to the Baltic on the day of her arrival at Stornoway.

Mr. MUNDELLA.—The light dues in the case referred to by the hon. member were levied under statutory provisions from which the Board of Trade have no power to grant exemption. The Board of Trade cannot refund dues so paid, but the question of submitting an order to her Majesty in Council to exempt in future from payment of light dues vessels which under certain circumstances put into port for provisions is now being considered.

DISUSED ARMY CLOTHING.

Mr. HANBURY asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether in the contracts under which the disused clothing of the Army was disposed of any penalty was inserted to provide against the degradation of her Majesty's uniform by employing it for advertising or similar purposes; and, if not, what precautions were taken; and whether the War Office had any powers or intended to ask for powers; and, if so, what, to prevent the national uniform being thus dishonoured.

Mr. WOODALL.—The clause in this contract provides a penalty of £10 for each infraction of the condition as to selling uniforms, without previous removal of distinguishing marks. This is the extent of the power possessed by the War Office, and I fear there would be but little prospect of carrying any legislative enactment in regard to this subject. (Hear, hear.)

OBsolete ARMY STORES.

Mr. HANBURY asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether his attention had been called to advertisements by a firm of contractors at Downton Market, offering "nearly 4,000 spades and shovels, Army goods never been used," at very low prices; and whether the facts stated in the advertisements were false; and, if not, how it happened that Army goods, "which have never been used" were thus sold to contractors.

Mr. WOODALL.—These spades are supposed to be of an obsolete pattern which, after having been for more than 20 years in store, were sold about three years ago, there being no Army use to which they could be put. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. HANBURY asked whether the hon. member would make inquiries into the matter and would not rest content with mere surpositions.

Mr. WOODALL said that he was having inquiries made into the subject. (Hear, hear.)

POISONOUS TRADES.

Mr. MACNEILL asked the Secretary for the Home Department whether his attention had been drawn to the reports in the *Daily Chronicle* newspaper of the 15th, 21st, and 28th of December, to the paper on "Deadly Poisonous Trades" in the *Fortnightly Review* of February, 1893, wherein the writer alleged that 64 cases of deaths from lead poisoning occurred in one factory alone in six months, and to the article entitled "Wanton Waste of Life" in the *Whitehall Review* of the 4th of February; and what steps the Government intended to take to investigate and, if possible, prevent this loss of life in the white lead factories.

Mr. ASQUITH.—This matter has for some time

engaged my attention. The facts require further elucidation, and with the co-operation of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, I have arranged for the institution of an exhaustive inquiry into the case both in its industrial and in its sanitary aspects. (Hear, hear.)

THE OCHER-HILL NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. P. STANHOPE asked the Vice-President of the Council on Education whether his attention had been directed to the circumstances under which the national schools at Ocher-hill, Tipton, had been closed; and whether he would take steps to expedite the provision of suitable and convenient school accommodation for the 400 children who attended them.

Mr. ACLAND.—This school was closed on the 9th of January last, apparently in consequence of the refusal of the annual grant by the Department owing to the managers declining to certify the returns called for by the Department as correct. It is the intention of the Department to secure the adequate provision of school accommodation in this district immediately. (Hear, hear.)

THE CENSUS RETURNS FOR SCOTLAND.

In answer to Mr. BUCHANAN,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—The progress made in the work of the census corresponds with the anticipation of the Registrar-General in November, 1891. The first volume of the report was published last July. At that time the work of the Boundary Commissioners who have made many important changes in the boundaries both of counties and parishes was not furnished, and the census tables were prepared on the former basis. Now the boundaries are known, and a supplement showing the results of the Boundary Commission is being brought out. The first part of the second volume should be published this month. The final portion, it is hoped, will be issued in August next. (Hear, hear.)

PROSECUTIONS FOR NON-VACCINATION.

Mr. HOPWOOD asked the Secretary for the Home Department whether his attention had been directed to the committal of George Ransom, of High-park, Northiam, Sussex, to prison on the 13th inst. for the non-vaccination of his child; whether it was the fact that this man had already undergone three imprisonments for objecting to vaccinate his children; whether the three imprisonments were in respect of the same child; and whether, in accordance with the unanimous interim report of the Royal Commissioners on Vaccination against repeated prosecution, he would consider the expediency of setting the man at liberty.

Mr. ASQUITH.—My attention has been called to this case, and I am informed that the statements in the second and third paragraphs of the question are correct. I have requested the committing Justices to furnish me with a report, but until I have received it I cannot come to a decision as to the propriety of the sentence. I must add that I greatly regret these repeated prosecutions and imprisonments for that which is in substance a single infraction of the law, and that I propose in a Bill which I shall shortly introduce to ask Parliament to make them impossible. (Hear, hear.)

SCOTCH MAGISTRATES.

In answer to SIR J. PENDER,

SIR G. TREVELYAN said,—The magistrates of Royal burghs are frequently placed permanently on the county bench, but such appointment is made by the Lord Chancellor on the recommendation of the

Lord Lieutenant. The Secretary for Scotland has no voice and no responsibility in the matter whatever. I only wish he had. (Hear, hear.)

THE CASE OF JOHN DALY.

Mr. W. REDMOND asked the Secretary for the Home Department whether his attention had been directed to the proceedings of the Watch Committee of the Birmingham Corporation, reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post* of February 15, from which it appeared that Alderman Manton asked that an opportunity should be given to him of making an affidavit that the statements made by him relating to the arrest and conviction of John Daly were true, and an opportunity of publicly questioning the Chief Constable of Police, Mr. Farndale, as to his (Mr. Farndale's) statement that the explosives found upon Daly were planted upon him by an agent of the Irish police; and whether, in view of the fact that this opportunity was not so afforded to Mr. Alderman Manton, he would order a fresh investigation into the serious allegations made against the police, and question Mr. Farndale upon the subject.

Mr. ASQUITH.—I have referred to the report in question, and find that after some discussion Mr. Alderman Manton withdrew, for the present, the proposal which he had made to the committee. So far as the matter is a personal one affecting Mr. Alderman Manton and Mr. Farndale, I have no title to interfere. So far as it affects the guilt or innocence of Daly, the allegations referred to have already been fully and closely investigated, with the result which I stated to the House the other night. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. W. REDMOND said that, arising out of the answer of the right hon. gentleman, he wished to ask whether it was true that he had personally investigated the case of John Daly, and whether he thought that the investigation into that case would be complete without he had an interview with Mr. Farndale, and whether he would have an interview with that gentleman. He also wished to ask the right hon. gentleman whether a fresh investigation into the case should not be had, in view of the fact that 80 Irish members desired that it should be held.

Mr. ASQUITH.—I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by my having a personal interview with Mr. Farndale. (Hear, hear.) I am in full possession of his statements, which do not appear to be based upon facts within his own knowledge, but upon assertions which have been made to him. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. W. REDMOND asked whether the right hon. gentleman would answer the latter part of his supplemental question—namely, whether he would enter into a fresh investigation of the case because 80 Irish members desired that he should do so.

Mr. ASQUITH.—I have already stated that I have decided this case upon the facts. I have submitted those facts to the most careful investigation in my power, and unless new facts are brought forward I cannot consent to reopen the inquiry. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. J. REDMOND said that this was a most important matter. Would it not be wise for the right hon. gentleman, in view of the strong expression of opinion on the part of Irish members, to institute a new investigation into the case?

Mr. ASQUITH.—I can only repeat what I have already said. I have given the case the most ample and full investigation in my power, and I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by my reopening the inquiry. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. W. REDMOND said that, in view of the unsatis-

factory nature of the right hon. gentleman's reply, he begged to give notice that he would take the earliest opportunity of calling the attention of the House to the question, and of pressing upon the right hon. gentleman the necessity for instituting a fresh investigation into the case. (Hear, hear.)

THE ROYAL ARSENAL WORKMEN.

In answer to Mr. LOUGH,

Mr. WOODALL said.—A workman discharged from the Royal Arsenal on account of scarcity of work or for sickness does not lose the benefit of his service if re-employed within three years in the same or any other department of the ordnance factories. (Hear.)

QUALIFICATION FOR IRISH POOR LAW

GUARDIANS.

Mr. HAYDEN asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether the Local Government Board still persisted in refusing to make a general reduction in the rateable qualification for Poor Law guardianship unless the boards of guardians passed resolutions in favour of the reform; whether he was aware that those boards of guardians were at present constituted as to one-half of *ex-officio* over whom the ratepayers had no control, and half of elected guardians whose rateable qualification must be on an average four times that existing in England; whether, in view of the principle accepted by the House of Commons on Wednesday in favour of abolishing all qualifications in England for such offices other than occupations, he would ask the Irish Local Government Board to reconsider the matter; and who were the present members of the Irish Local Government Board.

Mr. J. MORLEY.—I am informed by the Local Government Board that since the 3d inst., when I replied to a question put by the hon. member on this subject, the rating qualification for the office of guardian has been reduced in three unions, and that the Board do not refuse to make reductions, without the approval of the guardians, when such reductions are shown to be desirable. The facts regarding the constitution of Poor Law boards are as stated, but in a large majority of the unions in Ireland the *ex-officio* members who attend the meetings are in a minority. With reference to paragraph 3, it must be borne in mind that the incidence of Poor Law rating in Ireland is different from that in England. The members of the Local Government Board are the Chief Secretary, the Vice-President, the Under-Secretary, the Medical Commissioner, and Mr. Commissioner Robinson. (Hear.)

RAILWAY RATES.

Mr. BRAND asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he was aware that the carriage of potatoes in two-ton lots from the Wisbech district, previous to the amalgamation of the Midland and Great Northern Railways in 1890, was 9s. 2d. per ton; that in 1890 it was raised to 12s. 6d., and that the new rate was now 14s. 6d. per ton; that that for vegetables (Brussels sprouts, &c.), previous to 1890, for under one ton, was 13s. 4d., station to station; that, since the amalgamation of the Great Northern and Midland Railways, the rate had risen to 26s. 8d., and that it was now 28s. 6d., or more than double the rate previous to 1890; and whether, in consideration of the extreme importance this question was to allotment holders and farmers, he would approach the railway companies with a view to a reduction of the rate on the above-mentioned articles to what it was previous to 1890.

Mr. MUNDELLA.—I have been in communication with the Great Northern Railway Company, and I am informed that the facts are not quite as stated in the

hon. member's question. It is admitted that on two-ton lots of potatoes the price has been raised since 1890 from 9s. 2d. to 12s. 6d. per ton. On Brussels sprouts, cabbages, &c., the company deny there is any substantial increase, and there are other reductions to set against such increase. I shall be happy to show the hon. gentleman the details. Upon the general question I can only repeat that I am in daily communication with the Railway Association with the object of procuring a reduction in their rates. (Hear, hear.)

CAPTAIN LUGARD'S REPORT.

Mr. R. WALLACE asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether he was aware that the Imperial British East Africa Company permitted members of that House to peruse the unutiliated copy of Captain Lugard's report at their offices for "private and confidential information only"; and, whether, having regard to the facts that this company was the beneficiary of a Royal charter and the recipient of public money, he would put some pressure upon it to grant such a perusal of the report as might be of service for purposes of Parliamentary discussion.

Sir E. GREY.—I understand that the statement in the first paragraph of the question is accurate, but her Majesty's Government have no power to put pressure on the company. (Hear, hear.)

THE CENSUS RETURNS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the President of the Local Government Board when the census returns for England and Wales would be issued, and what was the cause of the delay.

Mr. H. FOWLER.—I replied to a similar question of the hon. member for East Somerset on the 2d of this month. I then stated that I was informed by the Registrar-General that he hopes to be able to present to Parliament the volumes of the detailed census reports which relate to area, houses, and population of parishes in April next. This will be some weeks earlier than was the case with the corresponding volumes of the report of the census in 1881, though several fresh items of information will be included in the report relating to the census of 1891. A further volume will be issued about midsummer. The final volume is expected to be issued in the autumn. (Hear, hear.)

THE REPORT OF THE VACCINATION COMMISSION.

Mr. HOPWOOD asked the President of the Local Government Board whether he was aware that the fourth report of the Royal Commission on Vaccination had not yet been issued, although a fourth report was laid upon the table of the House in 1891, and a fifth report, dated April 21, 1892, had since been presented and published; and whether he would cause inquiry into the cause of the delay and expedite the publication.

Mr. H. FOWLER.—I am informed by the Royal Commission on Vaccination that the fourth report will be issued about the end of March. The fifth report, with no appendices, was issued without any delay, but the very voluminous appendices to the fourth report have delayed its issue. (Hear, hear.)

THE POSITION OF PRISON WARDERS.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it was a fact that the great reduction in the number of criminals in our convict prisons had made the promotion of warders very slow; whether, in consequence, he would consider the propriety of placing their pay and pro-

motion on the same footing as that of the Metropolitan Police; and whether he would state what extra charge would be thrown upon the estimates by such a change.

Mr. ASQUITH.—It is true that the promotion of warders in the convict prisons has been retarded by the reduction in the number of criminals. But the whole subject of the pay and promotion of convict prison warders was considered as lately as July, 1891, by Lord de Ramsay's Committee, and on the report of that committee the Home Secretary, in conjunction with the Treasury, adopted what they considered fair and sufficient alleviations of the disadvantages arising therefrom. The duties, terms of engagement, and conditions of service of the police are so different from those of warders that there is no ground for assimilating their pay and promotion. What the cost of doing so would be it is impossible to say.

In reply to a further question by VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, as to whether it was a fact that the warders of Borstal Prison, when on day duty, were allowed a half-holiday every alternate Saturday, and, if so, why the warders on night duty had no corresponding advantage,

Mr. ASQUITH said,—The same class of warders perform day and night duty, and each officer before commencing his turn of a fortnight's night duty has half a day off, and another half-day after its termination.

IRISH SHERIFFS AND POLICE PROTECTION.

Mr. CARSON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Court of Appeal in Ireland had dismissed the appeal from the order of the Queen's Bench Division holding that the refusal of the Executive to give police protection to sheriffs at night in the execution of judgments was illegal, and what steps he intended to take in consequence.

Mr. J. MORLEY.—The Court of Appeal in Ireland decided yesterday that it had no jurisdiction to entertain an appeal from the decision of the Queen's Bench Division in this matter. They did not enter into the merits, but dismissed the appeal on the point of jurisdiction, and upon that alone. The Lord Chief Baron, than whom there is no more competent authority upon the Bench, in giving judgment, is reported to have said that he was personally desirous that some mode should be devised which would involve a decision of the House of Lords—not as a political body, but as a tribunal of appeal—upon the matter; he could consider no matter more worthy of the consideration of that high tribunal. And Lord Justice Barry said he regretted, in common with the Chief Baron, that they were not in a position to give an authoritative opinion upon the question involved in the decision of the Queen's Bench; that it would be very satisfactory indeed if the matter could be put on a solid and distinct basis. That is the effect, so far as I can gather from the newspaper reports, of what passed yesterday in the Irish Court of Appeal. A new regulation will be at once framed in conformity with the law as declared by the Court of Queen's Bench; but in the face of the language used by the Lord Chief Baron and Lord Justice Barry, it will be for the Irish Government to consider whether they cannot obtain a decision from the highest Court of Appeal upon the point, and whether Parliament ought not to be asked to settle this question, and, I hope, to settle it in conformity with the general current of legislation, which has been restrictive of these night operations. (Loud Irish cheers.)

Mr. CARSON.—Might I ask the right hon. gentleman whether he has any objection to lay upon the table of the House the judgments of the Queen's Bench Division? (Cries of "Don't answer" from the Irish members.)

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY.—While the right hon. gentleman is considering, may I ask him at the same time to say whether he will consult the law officers as to whether they are satisfied with the decision?

Mr. J. MORLEY.—In reply to the right hon. gentleman and to the hon. member I have to say that we have not, as yet, got a full and authentic report of yesterday's proceedings, but we shall consider, after taking proper advice, whether it is not possible to take up to the highest tribunal the question of jurisdiction which was decided yesterday provisionally.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. BALFOUR repeated his question as to the course of business next week. He understood from the answer given by the First Lord yesterday that he would be now prepared to make a further communication to the House on the subject.

Mr. GLADSTONE said that his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department had already informed the House that on Thursday he would move for leave to bring in a Bill with reference to the Church in Wales.

Mr. HOZIER inquired whether it was proposed to bring in the Scotch Suspensory Bill on Thursday also.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—No; the Welsh Bill will be the only business on Thursday.

THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Mr. WEBSTER wished to be informed whether the report in the papers were true, that the United States had decided to annex the Sandwich Islands.

SIR E. GREY.—I think I must ask the hon. member to give notice of the question.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE—THE TWELVE O'CLOCK RULE.

Mr. GLADSTONE, at the commencement of Public Business, moved that the proceedings on the motion for leave to bring in the Government of Ireland Bill, if under discussion at 12 o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order "Sittings of the House."

Mr. BARTLEY desired to know whether, looking to the short time which had elapsed since the opening of Parliament, and seeing that this was already the third occasion upon which it had been proposed to continue contentious business beyond midnight, it was the intention of the Government to do away with the 12 o'clock rule altogether.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I have no intention of proposing to abolish the rule in question. I quite admit that upon two previous occasions this Session it has been found expedient to suspend the rule, but the motions then proposed have grown out of the special circumstances of each case, and did not, in any degree, imply permanent alteration of the rule.

The SPEAKER then put the motion from the Chair, when it was agreed to.

NEW BILLS.

The following Bills were brought in and read a first time:—

Mr. P. STANHOPE.—Bill to enable local authorities to acquire, construct, and administer canals.

MAJOR RASCH.—Bill to provide for the compulsory labelling of foreign and colonial meat.

Mr. SCHWANN.—Bill to remove disabilities of policemen with regard to their vote in municipal, school board, and other elections.

Dr. CAMERON.—Bill to amend the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875, and the Margarine Act, 1887.

Dr. CAMERON.—Bill to reform the constitution and procedure of parochial boards in Scotland, and the mode of electing the members of such boards.

THE HOME RULE BILL.

The debate on the Prime Minister's motion for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the provision for the Government of Ireland was resumed by

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, who rose amid Opposition cheers. He said:—I think that those members of this House who had the privilege of being present seven years ago, when my right hon. friend first introduced the subject of Home Rule to the House of Commons, will recognize that between now and then a great change has come over the sympathies of the House and the circumstances of the Bill. At that time I think the universal impression was one of wonderment and surprise that any English statesman, and, above all, the Prime Minister, should adopt and propose such a policy. At that time every member of the then front bench was believed to have pledged himself by very recent utterances against even the consideration of any such policy (cheers), and the vast majority of that House were undoubtedly in the same position. Under these circumstances it was only natural that those of us who opposed the Bill, and especially those of us who found ourselves compelled by this new policy to separate ourselves from old friends and old associates—I say, it was only natural that we should take the course of confronting the promoters of the Bill with their own utterances, and that we should seek to show out of their own mouths the folly and unwisdom of the course which they were pursuing. (Cheers.) But now that is all ancient history. The members of the Government—the then promoters of the Bill—have made their answer, such as it is, to the charges of inconsistency which we brought against them; and I suppose it must be left to posterity to judge between us. (Cheers and counter-cheers.) But in any case I say for myself that I do not think it worth while to pursue any longer what I may call the recriminatory form of argument. We are face to face with the great fact that, whatever may have been the motives which induced this sudden surrender, at all events the fact is now that the great majority of the Liberal party are pledged to the principle of Home Rule, and have been strenuously endeavouring during the last seven years to make it a cardinal feature of Liberal policy. Under these circumstances I am not now going to question either their motives or their consistency. I am going to endeavour to meet them on their own ground, and I am going to invite them and to invite the House to consider how far this Bill, which was introduced by the Prime Minister on Monday night, fulfils the declared intentions and objects of its own promoters. Now, what is the ground-work of this proposal of Home Rule? We have it in the language of the Prime Minister. He laid it down at the very outset, and it has been universally accepted by his own followers. It is that the time has come when it is the duty of this country to grant to Ireland the widest possible extension of local government consistent with the unity of the Empire, the supremacy of Parliament, and the protection of minorities. Now

for myself that is a formula, which, treated as an abstract proposition and a declaration of policy, I have never been able to resist. There may be some who are so fundamentally hostile to the whole question of Home Rule that they may be indisposed to accept even that assertion of principle. But, at all events, for myself I am prepared to determine my course and to try this Bill by the question, whether or not in giving this great extension of local government to Ireland it does maintain and fulfil the three conditions which were laid down as indispensable by the Prime Minister, and which have been unanimously accepted by all his followers. I would point out to hon. members that if the Bill fails to meet this test which I am about to apply to it, then a vote against the second reading of the Bill would not be a vote against Home Rule in the abstract, but it would be an expression of opinion by the House that this particular Bill did not fulfil the conditions which have always been attached to it. I hope the House will bear with me while I make a careful examination of it. (Cheers.) In doing so I am going to avoid absolutely anything in the nature of polemics, and I shall try to avoid, as much as I can, even a controversial method of treating this great question. The first point we have to consider is whether the Bill preserves Imperial unity. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister, in introducing the Bill the other day, said that it was his hope and belief, and that of his colleagues, that it not only maintained Imperial unity, but that it strengthened it. Well now what do we mean by Imperial unity? This is one of those phrases which is of necessity somewhat vague, and it is absolutely necessary, if we are to proceed with any advantage, that we should arrive at a common definition. I suppose we should all be agreed, without the slightest hesitation, in saying that this kind of unity prevails at the present moment in the United Kingdom. Does it prevail in the relations between the United Kingdom and our great dependencies like India, and, above all, does it prevail in our relations with the self-governing colonies? I should be disposed to answer all these questions in the affirmative; but I only put them in order to show to the House that there are various degrees of Imperial unity and that we must settle when we are talking of Ireland which degree it is which we intend to preserve in the case of that country. (Cheers.) Now, let us get to the bottom of the whole question. What is the test of Imperial unity? What is the importance of union? It is that the central authority shall have, for all purposes of offence and defence, full control of all the forces and of all the resources of the country in which that unity applies. (Cheers.) Now, in the United Kingdom, of course, that state of things already exists. If the Imperial Parliament chooses to go to war, the Imperial Parliament can spend the last penny of the United Kingdom; it can call out the last man that is fit for military service. In the case of our great dependencies the unity is somewhat more restricted. We could not call upon India except in a case in which Indian interests were distinctively affected; and in the case of a war in this country, if we were defending ourselves against attack, I do not think it would be possible for us to rely upon the monetary resources, and possibly not upon the military forces, of our Indian Empire. In the case of the colonies we have absolutely no power to rely upon either the one or the other. We might be engaged in a war to-morrow; we might be struggling for our very existence in a case the inciting feature of the commencement of

which had been in connexion with something in which one of our self-governing colonies was itself concerned, and yet we should have no right, legally or morally, to call upon that colony to supply us with one single penny or with one single man. Well, now, I say, in dealing with Ireland—I hope I have made the distinctions clear—I think it is evident that the Imperial unity which we want to preserve is the Imperial unity which already exists. (Cheers.) It is not such a unity as exists in the case of our dependencies, or such a unity as exists in the case of the colonies. This is a most important point. It is most important that we should have clear ideas upon this question, and let me, therefore, enforce it by another argument. My hon. and right hon. friends here declare emphatically that they are not in favour of separation. They resent any imputation made by us upon them to the effect that their policy is a separatist policy. Why are they against separation? Why, if 83 members were to ask for separation, or even 103, would they absolutely refuse it, as we know they would? As far as the domestic affairs of Ireland are concerned it does not much matter whether that country is separate or independent, or whether it is bound in any kind of connexion with this country, provided the Imperial Parliament once and for all surrenders its present control. The reason why my hon. friends, why we all, are opposed to separation is because of the geographical situation of Ireland (hear, hear), and because Ireland, within a few hours of our shores, cannot become independent without being a source of danger to the very existence of the Empire. (Cheers.) Does anybody doubt for one moment that if Ireland were a thousand miles away from England she would not have been long before this a self-governing colony? Her situation is controlled—it may appear to be hard to say so, but it is a fact—her political condition is controlled by her geographical situation, and her interests cannot be allowed to outweigh the interests of the larger country. (Cheers.) That being so, let us consider this Bill in this light, and let us see what is likely to be our position in any time of great emergency. I suppose we may be told that our position will depend a good deal upon the spirit in which the future Irish Parliament deals with affairs in which it may have a common interest with this country, or in which, at any rate, this country will have a paramount interest. Well, in what spirit is the Irish Parliament likely to deal with such questions? You, by your policy, are encouraging a spirit of Irish nationality. (Ministerial cheers.) You recognize, not that Ireland is a part of a great nation in which she has an equal interest, but that she is a separate and independent nation. Having recognized that great fact you fail, with an extraordinary want of logic, to give it its proper conclusion. Having recognized that Ireland is a nation, you proceed in your Bill, by a series of restrictive provisions, to deprive it of all the most cherished privileges of an independent nation. I am not going through all the restrictions contained in the Bill of 1886, which are repeated in this Bill; but take three of them. You deprive the Irish Parliament of all right to deal with the foreign policy of Ireland. You refuse to Ireland, therefore, its place among the nations of the world. (Cheers.) What place has a nation which cannot send an Ambassador to any other, which cannot separately treat with any other in regard to interests of the utmost possible concern? In the second place, you deprive this nation of the right which every other nation in the world enjoys, and which even some of our colonies

enjoy—the right of dealing as it pleases with its own Church and with its own system of education. (Hear, hear.) You are touching questions of religion and morals which concern most intimately the sentiments of the people. My right hon. friend said the other day that one of the greatest grievances of Ireland—I do not agree with him, but I quote him—is the inequality of the laws between the two countries. What greater inequality can you create than that Ireland should be debarred from dealing with its own Church, from setting up an established Church if it desire to do it, while England and every other nation can do that. (Hear, hear.) Thirdly, you propose to take from your Parliament in Ireland, representing this independent nation, all control over its own trade and Customs. I cannot forget what Mr. Parnell said in reference to this matter. He declared emphatically that no solution of this question would be satisfactory or final which did not give to the Irish Parliament the right to deal with its own trade and Customs (hear, hear), and did not allow it, if it saw fit—I do not know whether Mr. Parnell would himself have approved of such a course, but he said nothing would be satisfactory which did not allow to this Parliament the power—if it thought fit, to protect its own industries against the manufacturers of Great Britain. (Cheers.) Of all these three most important functions of an independent nation you, by your Bill, are going to deprive Ireland. All I can say is you are sowing the seeds of future discontent. (Cheers.) You are sowing the seeds of further demands. (Cheers.) The time at which that discontent will manifest itself, the time when those demands will be made, will be the time of England's emergency. (Cheers.) That will be the time which will be Ireland's opportunity, and it is perfectly absurd to suppose that Irishmen will not take advantage of that opportunity. (Cheers.) It would be to accuse them of want of patriotism from their own standpoint (hear, hear) if they do not use every weapon which you place in their hands in order to establish the full rights of the nation whose independence you are acknowledging. (Hear, hear.) The Bill is recommended to us as a final settlement. My right hon. friend, I think, altered the phraseology a little. He said it was to be a permanent and continuing settlement. What guarantee have you, I ask the House, that this Bill, with all these restrictions, with all these trammels, on the march of a nation, will be a final settlement? (Hear, hear.) You have the assurances of hon. gentlemen opposite. I think the hon. member for Kerry gave similar assurances in regard to the Bill of 1886. We were afterwards told that that Bill was a trumpery Bill (hear, hear), and that it was accepted *pro tanto*. I will not now throw upon the sincerity of hon. members opposite the slightest doubt, but can they guarantee their successors? (Cheers.) Can the hon. member for Kerry—if he can speak for himself and for his friends—can he speak for the leaders who will succeed him; can he speak for the leaders who even now, perhaps, are waiting to supplant him? (Laughter, and "hear, hear.") My object in this part of my argument is to show that your settlement being incomplete, Irishmen will have good ground, whenever an opportunity arises, for endeavouring to make the settlement complete; and by accepting this idea of nationality you justify their demands. (Cheers.) Those demands will be made at a time when it will be difficult, or impossible, for this country to resist them; and when they have been granted, tell me then where will be your Imperial unity? (Cheers.) I suppose I may be told, following the line of argument which has been

adopted from the front bench by the Chancellor of the Duchy and by the Secretary of State for War, that all this is seeking for hypothetical and problematical difficulties; that these are predictions which may, and probably never will be, accomplished. You may choose, if you please, to disregard them. All I can say is that, considering the interests which we have at stake, considering what it is which is at issue—the very existence of this country as a great nation (cheers)—I think that you treat these objections too carelessly. (Cheers.) However, put aside all predictions. Put aside the possibility—in my opinion, the certainty—that, before very long, further demands will be made upon you, that every concession will be extorted from you; but take the Bill as it stands, and ask yourselves what would be the position of the United Kingdom, above all, of Great Britain, if we were once more, after that Bill passed, engaged in a struggle for existence? (Hear, hear.) It is 40 years since the last great war, and I suppose the majority of members in this House hardly recollect anything about it. That war was not a struggle for existence. When the battle of Waterloo was fought, my right hon. friend was seven years old. We have been so long without any danger such as that which disappeared with the victory at Waterloo, that perhaps we have begun to think that this immunity is always likely to continue. But when we look to the present state of things on the Continent, when we know the causes for quarrels which at any moment may arise, when we see the ashes ready to burst into flame, when we know that more than 12 millions of men are now bearing arms, or are liable to be called upon to bear arms, can we believe, is it sensible to believe, that the millennium has come, and that we may never again be called upon to fight for our very existence? (Hear, hear.) I do not much like putting hypotheses, which to me are terrible, but suppose we were at war with a great Power—with the United States of America—which Heaven forefend, for such a strife would be a fratricidal strife—or with France, which would be almost as bad; or, if you like, with Russia, what would be your position? We are told we ought to rely upon the union of hearts, upon the good feeling which will be created by this Bill in Ireland and among Irishmen. I do not dispute it; I assume it for the sake of argument. But if gratitude is to be found in Ireland, to whom is that gratitude to be shown? Ireland will owe gratitude to Great Britain for this great concession, but does she not owe some gratitude to the United States of America? Does she not, in regard to some portions of her past history, owe gratitude to France? Is it certain that, in the case of a war like that, the public opinion of the majority in Ireland would not be in favour of the Power with which we were engaged in deadly struggle? If it be not certain that it would be so, at least it is probable. The 80 Irish members would come to the Imperial Parliament against the war, and they would make themselves heard probably at some length (laughter); they would embarrass and hamper the conduct of the war by the British Government, but they would be outvoted. When they were outvoted, you would have to make heavy demands in order to defray the cost of such a war. You would have, under this Bill, full control of the Customs, but you could not rely upon the Customs. You would have to rely upon the Excise, upon the income-tax, and upon internal taxes. Suppose you have got your taxation from the Imperial Parliament, all the collection of the taxes is in the hands of the Irish Parliament. (Cheers.) What if they resist?

I am not speaking at this moment of active resistance, but suppose that the sentiment of the country is against you, all the organization of the country, the Executive of the country, the police of the country, the judiciary of the country, the civil officials of Ireland—all are under the control of the native and popular assembly, all are moved by the same sentiment—it seems to me you would increase the risk of almost insurmountable obstacles. (Cheers.) We were told by the Chancellor of the Duchy that in these cases we must trust to the sweet reasonableness of Irishmen. (Laughter.) I do not know that they would be unreasonable if they opposed us in such a case. They have been taught to consider their interests apart from the interests of the United Kingdom. Their interests and their sentiments might be opposed to the policy which you were pursuing, and, if so, I am not here to say that they would not be justified in using all the opportunities which you have placed at their disposal in order to thwart that policy. (Hear, hear.) I do not know that it is worth while to refer to that which is a mere historical reminiscence, but I may remind the House that in the time of Grattan's Parliament Wolfe Tone published a letter to that Parliament urging and demanding that they should refuse assistance to this country in the case of war with Spain, precisely on reasons and arguments such as those which I have supposed might be laid before the future Irish Parliament. The Irish Parliament of that day did not follow Wolfe Tone's advice, for the best of all possible reasons, that it represented a party which was totally opposed to Wolfe Tone. (Hear, hear.) The Parliament of that day was a Protestant Parliament, a Parliament of the minority, a Parliament of the landowners; but if it had been a national Parliament, such as that which we are going to set up, my opinion is that its answer to Wolfe Tone would have been something very different. (Laughter and cheers.) I am discussing this matter as though the opposition would assume what I will call a *quasi-constitutional* aspect; but one must not dismiss altogether the possibility that it might go much further than that. You are going to keep in your hands the military forces. I do not know whether there is any provision in the Bill to prevent the formation of a Volunteer force; but when the whole administration is in the hands of the native Parliament it will be very difficult for you to prevent the arming of the people (hear, hear), and it will be very difficult for you to prevent in time of great national excitement the drilling of the people (hear, hear)—that is, of a people who are peculiarly apt in military affairs. (Hear, hear.) Again I ask the House not to treat these as distant probabilities and, therefore, to dismiss them. I like to think with you that they are distant probabilities, that it is highly improbable that we shall ever be at war, and that, if we are at war, it is highly probable that hon. members opposite, who have said so many harsh things in the past, will change their minds and give us their heartiest, their warmest, and their most generous support. (Cheers.) I like to believe all that, but you cannot deny that there is some risk, even if it is infinitesimal. Then, consider what is at stake, and do not act as a nation or as the representatives of a nation in a manner in which no private individual would act in his own case. (Cheers.) Why, Sir, there is not a man in this House who has any pecuniary interest in the house in which he lives who does not insure it against fire; and yet fire in a dwelling-house is an infinitesimal risk, as we know perfectly well by

statistics. At the same time, as prudent men, we provide against this infinitesimal risk, because if by any chance the accident did happen it might involve us in personal loss of the heaviest kind. (Hear, hear.) But what is at stake, I ask the House once more to consider, in this question of Imperial unity for Great Britain? It is not merely a loss of fortune in which we are concerned, it is a loss of honour (cheers), and it may be the loss of national existence. (Cheers.) Well, Sir, I think to tell us under those circumstances that we must have trust in circumstances about which we cannot have any certainty is to treat in a very happy-go-lucky way the breaking up of an ancient Constitution. (Cheers.) Upon this part of my argument let me summarize what I have had to say to the House. I say, in the first place, that Imperial unity is chiefly valuable in the case of Ireland so far as it protects us in time of war and in time of great emergency. By the new Constitution, I say, in the second place, we are recognizing the separate nationality of Ireland, and, at the same time, we fail to satisfy it. In the third place, we are making it certain that sooner or later Ireland will ask for more (cheers); and we are also making it certain that if she does ask for more, at some time of great difficulty for this country, she will get what she asks for, or she will seriously cripple us, perhaps, in the struggle for our very existence. (Cheers.) I ask, under these circumstances, what would become of the Imperial unity which my right hon. friend himself desires to maintain and even to strengthen? (Cheers.) Now, the second point is the question of the supremacy of Parliament. There is no doubt as to the importance of this point. The greatest stress has been laid upon it by all the principal promoters of this Bill. There is no doubt about the intentions of the Government. I could, if it were necessary, quote from the speeches and writings of every principal member of the Government on the front bench to show that in their intention, at all events, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is to be manifest, is to be continuous, and is to be operative in the highest degree. (Cheers.) That will not be denied. We want a definition, and I cannot find a better definition than the one I quoted from my right hon. friend the Home Secretary at an earlier period of the Session. When I quoted it he recognized it and cheered it, and I have no reason to suppose that he has gone from it in any way. Neither will his colleagues dispute it because, as I have already said, I can bring evidence to show that, although not in the same words yet practically to the same effect, every one of them has declared in favour of the maintenance of the absolute supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. (Hear, hear.) What my right hon. friend said, however, was this, that the unquestioned and unquestionable sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained intact and unimpaired over all persons and in all matters, local or Imperial. (Hear, hear.) Now, the first point I want to make to the House is this—and I put it particularly to my right hon. friends, because I think this must have escaped their attention—there are two branches of Imperial supremacy to which the definition of my right hon. friend equally refers—the supremacy over persons and the supremacy over matters. As regards the supremacy over persons there is not a shadow of a shade of it in this Bill. You have absolutely and entirely given up all pretence of the maintenance of any sovereignty by the Imperial Parliament over persons. (Cries of "No," and cheers.) I state my case and I think I shall prove it

as I go on. You are going to establish a separate Parliament. You are going to give a separate Executive, responsible to that Parliament and not to this. I say in these circumstances you have no longer any control over that Executive or over the officers whom that Executive may appoint. (Cheers.) Now, just let us see. Let us test it by one or two cases. I might give 50 illustrations, but I will take only two or three from past experience; not because I attach special importance to these particular cases, but only to illustrate the position in which we shall find ourselves. Take the case of the Plan of Campaign. Upon the question of the Plan of Campaign there was a distinct divergence of opinion between the members for Great Britain and the members for Ireland. There was some division, I think, among members from Ireland, but I let that pass. Generally speaking, one may say, the members for Ireland sympathized with the Plan of Campaign; and, generally speaking, the members for Great Britain denounced it as equivalent to robbery. (Cheers.) Now, so far as the Imperial Parliament had any control over the matter, they did their best to prevent the Plan of Campaign from succeeding. Now, suppose the Plan of Campaign started in Ireland after this Bill. The Imperial Parliament, I will assume, is still opposed to the policy of the Plan of Campaign. It would still stop it if it could. What can it do? The Executive in Ireland will have the power under this Bill to refuse the use of the police force to the persons who may be engaged in carrying out evictions. They will be able to withdraw all police protection from the landlord of the estate which is the subject of the Plan of Campaign, from the bailiffs, from the caretakers, and from the tenants who take the farms from which others have been evicted. (Nationalist cheers.) Under those circumstances the lives of the landlord, the farmer, the tenants, the bailiffs will not be worth a moment's purchase (cheers), and the Plan of Campaign must succeed in spite of anything the Imperial Parliament can do. Take another case. In Ireland boards of guardians sometimes take very strange notions of their duties. It was proved, I think, before a committee of this House that in one case a board of guardians had administered relief for political purposes, that they had given 20s. a week outdoor relief to persons in possession of bay and other forms of property, and that they had done this in order to encourage and support and compensate evicted tenants. What happened? The Local Government Board dissolved this board and appointed paid guardians to carry on the work.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY.—What was the case?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—It does not matter in the least (ironical Nationalist cheers) because I am merely putting forward an illustration. There was a great number of cases. (Cheers.) I believe this particular case was the case of New Ross, but I am not certain. I have not provided myself with the particulars.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY.—That board was not dissolved.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—The hon. member makes a most unnecessary interruption. I am putting a case which I believe did happen, but which, at any rate, the House will see might happen. I say what remedy would you have upon these matters of economic propriety on which we English and Scotch members have very strong notions indeed? We should think that proceedings of that kind by a representative board were corrupt and altogether indefensible (cheers), and if the Imperial Parliament had the power, there is no doubt whatever

it would dissolve any board that carried out a policy of that kind. But how can you do it under this Bill? What control have you under this Bill over persons? (Hear, hear.) I will only take one more case to show how it will affect almost every domain of administration. I may be told by the hon. member for Louth that this is not an accurate statement, but, again, I say if this did not happen, it might have happened. I have been told that in some places boards of guardians have made particular payments to sisters of mercy who had attended in connexion with the work of the dispensaries. Now, it is perfectly evident to the House that, if it were desired to do so, it would be perfectly possible under a system of this kind practically to endow Roman Catholic convents. There is nothing to prevent boards of guardians from making, if they please, such grants to ladies occupied in this work as would in effect provide for a very considerable endowment. (Hear, hear.) Well, that is in distinct contradiction of the restrictive clause in the Bill which pretends to prevent ecclesiastical establishments. All I want to ask the House is, How are you going to deal with it in this Bill? You cannot touch the boards of guardians, and, even if you were to make it illegal by law—which, I think, you would have some difficulty in doing—I do not see how you can get the law administered. I say, then, that for this one branch of supremacy and sovereignty over persons there is absolutely no provision at all, and when this Bill is passed the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament will no longer extend to persons, even if it does extend to matters. (Hear, hear.) As regards matters, I am perfectly ready to make the admission that there is a very plausible attempt to secure the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament over matters—that is to say, over legislation; but I venture to think that, though it is plausible, it will turn out to be illusory. In the first place, we are told that the principle of supremacy is to be reverentially noted in the preamble of the Bill. (Laughter.) I think that was a most curious expression. It reminded me of what is sometimes said when a corpse is reverentially committed to the earth (cheers and laughter), and I am afraid that the dead principle of supremacy is going to be reverentially enshrined in the preamble of this Bill. (Laughter and cheers.) But when it is there, what practical effect is it going to have? We have had the opinion of a high legal authority that the Courts would pay no attention to the preamble in such matters, and the use of the preamble for this purpose is merely to employ it to express a pious opinion. But we do not want a pious opinion. (Laughter.) We can get that from hon. members opposite. (More laughter.) The hon. member for Kerry told us that our supremacy was an incontrovertible fact, and the hon. member for Waterford said that our supremacy was an inalienable heritage. Yes, they will give you any number of statements of that kind. You may have all the advantages of the incontrovertible fact and the inalienable heritage, but when you come to employ your heritage, you will find out the difficulty of keeping it; and as to that both hon. gentlemen have been perfectly clear. They say, "Here is this weapon of which we cannot deprive you, but if you use it you will use it at your peril." (Cheers.) Let us look how it is to be used. Suppose we want to use the supremacy of Parliament in this Bill upon legislation. We have got the veto. I am not saying anything about the veto of the Irish Cabinet, because clearly that would be no use to us in a conflict between the Irish Cabinet and the British Cabinet.

But we have the veto of the British Crown. Have hon. gentlemen considered what the effect would be of the use of this veto by the Crown. I will take a case. Suppose the Irish Parliament—I think this, at all events, will be admitted to be a highly probable supposition—suppose the Irish Parliament to deal with a Bill such as that introduced two Sessions ago by Mr. O'Kelly for providing for the evicted tenants. Suppose such a Bill to be passed in the Irish Parliament. It was in the opinion of the majority of the Imperial Parliament a most iniquitous and unjust Bill—I am not saying whether it really was, I am only saying that in the opinion of the majority of the House it was—consequently, that is precisely the sort of Bill which, if a majority against it continues in the Imperial Parliament, will be undoubtedly vetoed by the Imperial Parliament. Now, then, what would be the state of the case? The Irish Ministry having brought in and passed that Bill with the assent of the vast majority of the Irish Parliament and the full assent of the majority of the Irish people, it is vetoed by the Lord Lieutenant. The Irish Ministry resign and no other Ministry can take their place and hold it for a single day. What is to become of the administration of the Government in Ireland? (Cheers.) You will have to use your veto, but, unless you are immediately prepared to follow that up by withdrawing this Constitution and taking again upon yourselves the whole government of Ireland, all you will have done by your veto is to bring about a deadlock. (Hear, hear.) Then I say that under these circumstances the weapon breaks in your hand the very first time you attempt to use it. (Cheers.) But there is another power, as I understand, also reserved to us. We may proceed by way of concurrent legislation. The Imperial Parliament does not give up, as I understand, its right to legislate for Ireland, and it may exercise that right in two ways. In the first place, it may move to apply to Ireland any English or Scotch Bill which is under discussion here, and, in the second place, I suppose it may also introduce special legislation for Ireland and proceed with it in the Imperial Parliament. Very well, Sir, but suppose that is done. Suppose you carried your legislation, and that the Irish Parliament is, as of course it must be in such a case, absolutely hostile to it, and the Irish Parliament has all the powers of administration in its hands, do you think it is possible—is it sensible to ask—that the legislation of one Parliament should be carried out by the administration of another Parliament which is hostile to it? (Cheers.) It seems to me impossible to exaggerate the consequences of this state of things. (Hear, hear.) Do not suppose that the result will be that we shall not exercise this veto, useless as it is for practical purposes. Do not suppose that we shall not exercise the right of concurrent legislation. It is impossible to ask such a thing. The hon. member for Waterford spoke of the statement of the leader of the Opposition as constituting a threat. No, Sir, it is not a threat; it is a statement of fact which results from the consideration of the circumstances. (Cheers.) The hon. member for Waterford wants the House to give him a guarantee at this stage that they will never use their supremacy in especially Irish matters. The House cannot give it. The Government cannot give it, because that would be absolutely false to their pledges. They have said they will maintain the supremacy of the Empire, and

they cannot give a guarantee that they will not use it. The hon. member for North Kerry appeared to be a little more moderate, but I imagine that he meant the same thing. He wants, not a guarantee, but an honourable understanding (laughter), that the veto and the right of concurrent legislation shall not be used in a capricious and vexatious manner.

Mr. SEXTON.—I did not say that at all; what I said was that that understanding should be included in the passing of the Act. (Ministerial cheers.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—I think the hon. member may have the understanding. I for one am perfectly willing to give it to him. (Laughter.) We will not interpose in a capricious or vexatious way. But is the hon. member certain that our definitions of what is capricious and vexatious will agree? (Laughter.) What are likely to be the points of difference between the Imperial—that is to say, the British—Parliament and an Irish Parliament? They will have to do, in the first place, with questions of finance, and the finance of this Bill, when it comes to be examined, will be found to be extremely complicated. It is perfectly well-known that the ideas of Irishmen as to their national obligations, or as to their *quota* of contribution, differ very materially from the ideas of Englishmen and Scotchmen.

Mr. HUNTER.—No, not Scotchmen.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—Not Scotchmen! I am sure I do not know whether the hon. member considers himself entitled to speak as the member for Scotland (laughter), or whether he speaks only for his own constituents. If so, that is a more liberal Scotch constituency than any I have ever heard of before (cheers and laughter), because, according to the hon. gentleman, his constituency, at any rate, will be willing to accept the Irish idea of their fair contribution, which will undoubtedly impose increased taxation upon Scotchmen and Englishmen to the extent of several millions a year. (Cheers.) I repeat that there are likely to arise questions of difference on this point. Then there is the question of religion. (Hear, hear.) How is it possible that with a Protestant nation on the one side and a Catholic nation on the other you shall not have from time to time differences of opinion as to legislation affecting religious questions? You have differences of opinion upon agrarian questions, and differences of opinion are likely to disclose themselves in regard to the administration of the criminal law. These are precisely the matters upon which on both sides of the Channel people feel most strongly (hear, hear), and they are questions upon which the majority in this House might very well think it to be its duty to interfere, and yet at the same time I think its interference would be considered capricious and vexatious by hon. members opposite. I say it is inevitable under this Constitution, whether you like it or not, that there will be interference, whatever the consequences of that interference may subsequently be. We know what the consequences will be. The hon. member for North Kerry said that in that case the retention of the Irish members at Westminster would stand them in good stead. (Cheers.)

Mr. SEXTON.—I think that the presence of the Irish members would render capricious and vexatious interference less likely. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—I think it would rather increase the difficulty. I do not want to retort upon the hon. member the charge brought against the leader of the Opposition, and to say that he used threats. I accept his statement as the mere statement of what is certain to follow, and the House perfectly under-

stands. (Hear, hear.) There is no necessity for any explanation. We knew what it means when 80 Irish members think it their duty to take an active part in our proceedings. (Cheers.) All I would ask the House to consider is how far, under these circumstances, the premise in the Queen's Speech will be fulfilled. This is a Bill to give relief to Parliament. (Laughter and cheers.) On the first occasion of the assertion of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament over Irish affairs you may bid a long good-bye to the relief of Parliament. (Loud cheers.) I may say, in passing, a few words upon this very important question of the retention of the Irish members. Now, I point to the curious way in which my right hon. friend introduced the subject. He explained to us that there were two alternatives—retention on the one hand, and non-retention on the other; and then he proceeded to set before us a balance, not of advantages, but of disadvantages. It was very difficult to tell for certain which way his own mind inclined, but I came to the conclusion that finally he had determined to adopt the course which, in accordance with his own argument, presents the greatest number of disadvantages. (Laughter.) In 1886 I ventured to say that this question of the retention of the Irish members is the key to the situation. (Cheers.) I argued strongly for their retention; and, Sir, I am prepared to argue strongly for it still. (Cheers.) For this reason—if you get rid of the Irish members from Westminster you must bid good-bye absolutely to any proposal to maintain the supremacy of Parliament or the unity of the Empire. You cannot do it. You cannot set up a Government here which is to tax Ireland, which is to conduct its foreign policy, which is to conduct and control its trade, and in which Ireland is to have no voice whatever. Therefore, I say that the retention of the Irish members at Westminster is an essential condition of the maintenance of our existing Parliamentary supremacy and also of the unity of the Empire. (Cheers.) But I also said then, and I say now, that if you accept the retention of the Irish members there are only two practical and logical ways of carrying it out. I challenge any one to find a third. I beg the House to understand that I am going to state what these two alternatives are; but do not let me be interrupted with any idea that I am arguing in favour of either. They may be both bad or both good; but at least they are the only two, and it is between them that the House will ultimately have to make its choice if it is determined to retain the Irish members at Westminster at the same time that there is to be a legislative authority in Dublin. The first of these alternatives is this—that the Irish Government and the Irish legislative body should be a wholly subordinate body, something like an enlarged edition of the London County Council. In that case it is perfectly clear that there is no attack upon the supremacy of Parliament or upon the unity of the Empire. At the same time, a body of that kind may be able to carry out local reforms in accordance with local sentiments, and do a great deal of useful work. That is one alternative. The other is that at the same time that you give a Parliament to Ireland you should give a Parliament to England, a Parliament to Scotland (Ministerial cheers), and a Parliament to Wales (Ministerial cheers), and that you should set up over these four Parliaments a fifth for the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) Yes, Sir, that is a large order. (Laughter.) But I am not saying that it may not be the way out of the difficulty. (Hear,

hear.) Only in that case let my hon. friends have the courage of their opinions; let them vote for that, and, above all, do not let them vote for this. (Cheers.) But, Sir, the course which is taken by the Government is open to every objection. (Cheers.) It is neither one nor the other of the two alternatives which I have explained to the House as being at least logical and feasible. The course proposed by the Government is an absolutely impossible one. Just consider what the two main objections are. I briefly touch upon them. In the first place, what is to be the position of the Irish delegation? They will be neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring. (Laughter.) They are to come here for Irish affairs and not for British affairs. Everybody who knows anything of the business of this House knows perfectly well that it is absolutely impossible for us to say with certainty even for a single week that the House should be engaged entirely on Irish affairs or entirely on Imperial affairs. Hon. members from Ireland would be kept dangling about the lobby—here to-day and gone to-morrow, never knowing when they will be called in to take their part; and if they are absent for a minute something may come on which it is of the utmost importance to them to have a voice in. A condition of things like that is so anomalous that I am perfectly convinced in practice it would be found intolerable. (Cheers.) There is no Legislative Assembly in the world which has any practice similar to that. I would not throw any doubt on the sincerity of the promoters of the Bill, but sometimes it almost appears to me as if they had introduced this clause as what in theatrical language would be called a practicable clause—that is to say, a clause which is to be withdrawn at the slightest pressure. (Laughter.) But there is a much greater objection, and it was stated admirably by my noble friend the member for Paddington last night. He said that by this provision you will create two majorities in the British Parliament. (Hear, hear.) Nobody has attempted to get over that difficulty. Are you going to have such a state of things that you may have a British Ministry with an absolutely precarious life and with no possibility of supplanting it by a firm and stable administration? Take the case as it stands to-day. Suppose this Bill had been passed this Session. Why, Sir, at this moment, when my right hon. friend got up from the Treasury bench in order to move "One man one vote," or the Suspensory Bills for Scotland and for Wales, he would be in a minority of 40. They might, it is true, call in tomorrow the Irish delegation, and they would be in a majority of 40. (Hear, hear.) But here is a curious position. This British Ministry would be absolutely powerless in all British affairs. (Opposition cheers.) No other Ministry would be possible. If, when they were in a minority on some British motion, another Ministry were allowed to come in, that Ministry, in turn, although in a majority in Great Britain, would hold its life absolutely at the mercy of Irish gentlemen opposite. (Opposition cheers.) What will be the consequence? The Prime Minister is fully alive to it. He pointed it out in dignified and impressive language on the introduction of the Bill. He said then that to introduce Irishmen to deal with all British affairs while they were at the same time dealing separately with their own affairs would be to create a temptation to intrigue which in the long run could not be resisted. My right hon. friend seemed to think that by this proposal he got rid of the difficulty. But, of course, as long as they can vote

upon Imperial matters, and especially upon a vote of confidence, they have all British policy absolutely at their disposal. (Cheers.) Under these circumstances the difficulties which my right hon. friend foresaw would be intensified. What would you have? You would have Irish members who were able under the Constitution to keep a British Ministry in office and then were unable under the Constitution to support a single one of the measures on which the British Ministry had set its heart. You have only got to state the question to see how absurd and how monstrous it is. (Cheers.) Our Parliamentary system would only work then at the price of continuous corruption. You would have to pay the Irish, not in money, but in kind. The Government in such a minority as I have suggested would, at all events, be continuously under the temptation to give to the Irish members something which they wanted for Ireland in order to secure their support, their presence, or their absence, as might be desired, upon English affairs. Under these circumstances it is perfectly clear that the Irish Parliament, through its English delegation, would be able to make its own terms, and any phantom of Imperial supremacy which may now exist in this Bill would very speedily be cleared out of it. (Cheers.) I have only left myself one condition to which I have hitherto not referred. I mean the condition which demands protection for minorities. Of course, it follows that the protection to be afforded is to be adequate and sufficient. Now here again the argument, as far as I have heard it, from members speaking for the Government has been—You must trust to the good faith and reasonableness of the Irish members. They will not want to do anything oppressive, anything which would interfere with personal freedom; they will never oppress the minority. If there were anything in that argument it would carry us to this, that you ought not to have any restrictions at all. (Cheers.) If you have put restrictions in the Bill, if you have given these pledges, if you have yourselves stated this as a condition precedent to your introduction of the subject at all, you have bound yourselves to the opinion that, at all events, the slightest chance of any oppression of the kind we dread ought to be made impossible. And why? Is the danger so remote as some people imagine? It is part of the case of my right hon. friend that in times past the minority in Ireland has abused its rights in order to oppress the majority. Why are you to suppose that an Irish majority would be less likely to use its rights in the same way? (Hear, hear.) I notice in to-day's paper a very interesting account of an interview with that veteran and patriotic Irishman, Sir C. Gavan Duffy, in which he points out that under this Bill the majority in the Irish Parliament will be so enormously on one side that it is almost certain to become a despotic majority, and to oppress the minority. And, when we have regard to the special case of Ireland, we must not put from us as absolutely impossible the suggestion that if either a majority or a minority has undue power it might not abuse that power. When we consider the bitter controversies of race, of class, of religion, of party which have desolated Ireland for centuries, are we to expect that even the "union of hearts" will do away with the danger all in a moment? (Laughter.) Are we certain that Ulster will have nothing to fear from the legislation of the rest of Ireland? Are we certain that Protestants in Ireland will have nothing to dread from the religious legislation of gentlemen who may be nominated by the Roman Catholic priesthood? Are we certain that

landowners in Ireland will receive full justice from those whose avowed policy it has been to treat them as a British garrison, and to clear them, "stock, lock, and barrel," out of the land? (Opposition cheers.) I think the Government are bound by their own statement, and the House is bound in honour, to defend our loyal fellow-subjects against the possibility of injury. (Cheers.) Now, what provision does the Bill make? In the first place, it seeks to protect the Protestants by declaring unlawful the establishment of a Church and also by some provision with respect to education. I do not want to draw the argument too fine, but I may be permitted to point out that, if there were a strong feeling in Ireland in favour of an established and endowed clergy, there is nothing in the Bill to prevent that being done. There are 50 ways in which your Bill could be legally evaded. I will give one, merely as an instance. Suppose that the Irish Parliament provided a considerable salary for the managers of schools. What is to prevent the district from electing the parish priest in every case as manager? (Hear, hear.) In that way, by a side wind, if the sentiment of the people were with you—it all depends on that—you could effect a great endowment of the Irish Roman Catholic Church, even in spite of the restrictive provisions of my right hon. friend. Then, as regards the landowners. The Irish Parliament is not to deal with the land for three years. If that is considered a boon to the landowners it is a very queer one. I am not certain that they will not petition this House that they may be executed at once. (Laughter.) But what is the meaning of it? What is the intention of the Government in excluding Irish land from the Irish Parliament for three years? Do they intend to deal with it here in the course of that time? I argue that they must intend to deal with it, because, if they do not, the exclusion of the land question appears to me to be a most foolish proposal. (Laughter and cheers.) That is the easiest word I can use. If they do not intend to deal with it, surely, as undoubtedly the question will arise in the interval, they should allow the Irish Parliament to deal with the matter, which is to them of vital importance. But if they do intend to deal with it, I can only say that during the next three years we shall hear very little indeed of the Newcastle programme. (Opposition cheers and laughter.) Will it be contended by any reasonable man that these provisions with regard to the Church and the land for the short period of three years are sufficient protection against the dangers which, at all events, Protestants and landowners now fear? Then we have what is really the great invention of the Government—we have got the Second Chamber. I am not going to argue the principle of a Second Chamber, although I cannot help thinking that some of my right hon. friends will be in some difficulty when this question comes to be discussed in Committee. (A laugh.) I have had put into my hands an extract from a speech made in June, 1892, by the right hon. gentleman the Home Secretary, in which he is reported to have said:—"Having somewhat carefully studied the experience of countries where Second Chambers exist I have found—unless perhaps in the doubtful case of the United States where they have a Federal Constitution—that the Second Chamber is not the least service to the country to which it belongs." (Laughter.) My right hon. friend was asked at Gateshead for some explanation. "You stated," it was said. "that you differed in this from Mr. Glad-

stone, who in his model Constitution for Ireland in the Bill of 1886 proposed and provided for a Second Chamber"; and my right hon. friend is reported to have answered, "I never approved that provision of the Home Rule Bill, and I am quite sure it is not likely to appear in any Home Rule Bill for the future." (Much laughter.) Well, I consider that really to be a matter of very small importance. All I can say is that when the matter comes on in Committee I shall be prepared to vote for the exclusion of this Second Chamber (hear, hear), and I shall do so because it is a thoroughly and absolutely ineffective body for the purpose for which it is framed. (Hear, hear.) The idea that a body of this kind consisting of 48 members is to give any protection either to the landlords, to Ulster, or to the Protestant minority is perfectly childish. (Hear, hear.) I have no reason to believe that such a body will consist largely either of Protestants, Ulstermen, or landlords. But even if it did, still, as we are told, all they can do is to delay the injustice against which they are protesting for two years; at the end of that time they must be outvoted. (Hear, hear.) I have not asked whether this is right or not. You have given this Second Chamber as a protection; I have pointed out that it is no protection at all, and the hon. member for Northampton says "Hear, hear." (Laughter.) And now I will conclude after one word on the question of Ulster. For the minority in Ulster—it overlaps and partly includes the other minorities—there is absolutely no protection at all. (Cheers.) And when we revert to this, what is the answer of the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy? The answer is a sneer and a defiance. (Loud cheers.) Ulster has said by its representatives in this House that it will resist any Constitution of the kind which it is attempted to force upon it. The answer is that we are to pay no attention to the representatives of Ulster and to take no notice of their bragging ways. (Loud cheers.) Whether their ways are bragging or not—

Mr. BRYCE.—I did not say that. I said that, even if my right hon. friend did not repeat the words he used in 1886, it was because those words received no response, and he did not think it necessary to repeat them. But I never intended to intimate that any representation from Ulster now would not receive the same consideration. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—Now I ask the House to recall the language of the right hon. gentleman. (Cheers.) He said what he said now, but he said something else. (Cheers.) He said that we were not to pay attention to the language of Ulster members.

Mr. BRYCE.—I did not say that.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—He said in effect we were not to pay attention to the bluster.

Mr. BRYCE.—What I said was that this House was not to take its knowledge of Ulster from noise and bluster. (Cheers.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.—Now the House understands (loud cheers) the value of the contradiction of the right hon. gentleman. (Renewed cheering.) When members from Ulster get up and speak in the name of Ulster (Nationalist cries of "A portion")—Protestant Ulster if you like, I am always speaking of that minority (cries of "Majority")—yes; the majority in Ulster, but the minority of Ireland—when representatives of this part of the United Kingdom get up in this House and profess that they represent the opinions of their constituents, the Chancellor of the Duchy tells them and the House that they do not represent their constituents, but they represent only their own bluster. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) In

the same speech, within a few sentences of the words I have quoted, the right hon. gentleman, forsooth, takes us to task for not speaking with sufficient respect of the language and expression of opinion of the representatives of the rest of Ireland. It is only the representatives of Ulster that bluster. (Much laughter and cheering.) Sir, I do not pretend to be an authority upon Ulster, like the Chancellor of the Duchy. I have no right to speak in its name; but I know that this people of Ulster are of the same blood as ourselves (cheers), and that in their past history they have given evidence of courage and of determination. (Cheers.) I know that now in their modern history by their energy and initiative they have done for the prosperity of Ireland more than all the rest of its inhabitants (cheers), and when they tell us by their members and by their conventions that they will resist, I for one am not going to treat them, as the Chancellor of the Duchy does, as boasters and liars. (Loud cheers.) I say that for Ulster there are no safeguards in this Bill worth the paper on which they are written. (Cheers.) Ulster, as the noble lord the member for Paddington said, must take care of itself. (Loud cheers.) I have never said—I have not sufficient knowledge to express an opinion upon the subject—that Ulster will fight. But I say this, that if she does fight (cries of "Oh, oh," and loud cheers)—if she does fight it will take more than the power of the most powerful Liberal Government to coerce her into submission. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) Well, Sir, I have now fulfilled the task which I undertook (cheers), and I apologize again to the House for having kept it so long. (Cheers.) I have put aside all the details of the Bill, especially I have not said a word about finance, which will require most careful consideration at a later stage. For myself I am totally unable to reconcile the statement of the right hon. gentleman as to the contribution of Ireland under the Bill with the statement which he made in 1886 (hear, hear), and I wish very much that it would be possible for my right hon. friend to put upon the table with the Home Rule Bill a statement of the financial arrangements which he proposes, and, if possible, to show in that statement exactly what the state of British finance will be before and after the Home Rule Bill. We want to know what we are to lose by the transference. Although I have not gone into details, I have tried to shew that the conditions laid down by my right hon. friend have not been fulfilled—that that Imperial unity which alone is of any value has not been maintained, that our strength in time of war would be seriously impaired, that the supremacy of Parliament would become an unsubstantial pageant, "the baseless fabric of a vision," and that the professed safeguards for minorities are altogether inadequate for their protection. (Cheers.) These conditions have not been carried out, and we are asked to proceed with this legislation in a spirit of childlike trust and hopelessness. If the scheme succeeds at all it will succeed because of the unexampled moderation of the present leaders of the Irish party, and of all the leaders that shall ever come after. (Laughter.) If that moderation ceases for a single year, the troubles I have foreseen must inevitably arrive. But, on the other hand, if this scheme fails, we cannot retrace our steps. (Hear, hear.) The policy you are now asked to adopt is an irrevocable policy. (Cheers.) I cannot understand the lightness with which hon. members talk of withdrawing those concessions at a future time if the result should not answer their present expectations. We have to consider the conditions

under which the withdrawal might have to be met. It might be in a time of great excitement after a prolonged and bitter struggle between the Irish Parliament and the British Ministry; and with Ireland at fever heat, perhaps in insurrection, in a time of great emergency for this country, with all the friends of Ireland and all the enemies of Great Britain throughout the world looking on, your task would be gigantic and it might even be impossible. (Loud cheers.) No; if we commit this national crime (Opposition cheers), we must at least have the courage to look forward to the possible consequences, and I say that never before in the history of the world has a risk so tremendous been encountered with such light-hearted indifference to its possible results. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. BLAKE, referring to the speech made in this debate by the leader of the Opposition, said that the right hon. gentleman argued that there was a good case against the policy of Home Rule because Ireland had for some time been tranquil and uncoerced. But what was the true reason of Ireland's comparative tranquillity? It was the prospect held out to her people that there would soon be an end of the system of government under which they had groaned for many years. (Cheers.) A happy consummation, thanks to the unabated zeal and unfaltering fervour of the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government in the Irish cause, was now, he believed, in sight. If, however, the expectations of the Irish people should be balked, if all the difficulties which the present measure was intended to solve were to remain unsolved, their—he did not say it as a threat—hope turned to despair might produce results absolutely fearful to contemplate. (Cheers.) It was a singular thing that whatever scheme of Home Rule might be proposed it always turned out to be impracticable in the view of the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham. Yet the right hon. gentleman was, he believed, one of the eldest Home Rulers in Great Britain. (Laughter and "Hear, hear.") As long ago as 1874 the right hon. gentleman announced that he approved of the Home Rule movement and that he was of opinion that the Irish had a right to govern themselves and manage their own affairs. (Ministerial cheers.) The right hon. gentleman added that to concede Home Rule would be an advantage to both countries, for the Irish would be satisfied and the Legislature here would move at an accelerated pace without the Irish members. "At present," the right hon. gentleman said, "the Legislature only travelled by parliamentary trai, and that was not quick enough for him." (Hear, hear.) At what a snail's pace did the right hon. gentleman's present train travel! Then in 1881 the right hon. gentleman pointed out that the Irish question was no new problem, that every generation in turn for 400 years had had to deal with it, that each generation had bequeathed it unsettled to its successor, and that the removal of the English garrison at any time would have been the signal for an uprising of the people. The problem to which the right hon. gentleman referred in 1881 was less grave now in consequence of the arrangements made by the Liberal party in 1886, but it would certainly recur in an intensified form if those arrangements should fail of execution. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman's great objection to the proposal made in 1886 was the non-inclusion of the Irish members, and he had pointed out how much their retention meant, and also consequences, politically of the utmost gravity, as flowing from that state of things. He agreed with the right hon. gentleman; his belief had always been that the retention

of the Irish members was a most proper element in the adjustment of the question. He regretted that the right hon. gentleman now found that retention so difficult as to be impossible. (Cheers.) Before the Liberal Unionist party had assumed its present attitude of impotence in this matter (cheers), and while yet the right hon. gentleman felt, with some remainder of the traditions of Liberalism (hear, hear), that the Irish question did require constructive legislation for its solution, he had put out a profuse programme which contained many of the most important elements of the present measure. It provided that the Irish members should be retained for Imperial purposes in the Imperial Parliament (loud cheers); it also provided for the minority, so far as religion and education were concerned, those guarantees which the Bill of 1886 contained; and it declared that not merely upon reason and theory, but also from practical experience in the working of the Constitutions of other countries, those guarantees had been found ample and adequate for the purpose. (Hear, hear.) But now the right hon. gentleman, finding that many of his suggestions had been adopted in the Bill, declared that they were absolutely useless and impracticable (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman had asked whether the Bill preserved the Imperial unity, and whether the central authority would have full control of the forces for offence or defence. His answer was "Yes"; for the present measure was designed to prevent the recurrence or continuance of those very feelings to which the right hon. gentleman had alluded when he stated that the result of the solemn compact and treaty of perpetual peace between Great Britain and Ireland would produce the feeling that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity; but the right hon. gentleman forgot that his own statement was that that had been the feeling of Ireland for the last 400 years. (Cheers.) The Bill offered a prospect, and even a certainty, of putting an end to that state of feeling. (Hear, hear.) There was force in the contention of the right hon. gentleman that the geographical situation of Ireland was a bar to separation and that that barrier would prejudice the interests of Ireland. He thanked God, however, that it was possible to reconcile the interests of Ireland as they had now been learned by the great masses of her people with the continuity of the Union for all purposes of offence and defence, of managing our colonies and dependencies, of trade and trade policy and relations. With regard to the trade between the two countries, he believed that, serious as would be the loss to England, the loss to Ireland would be infinitely greater. The difficulties which William Pitt at the time of the debate on the Union had pointed out as difficulties to be guarded against by means of the Union were the very ones which were involved in the series of subjects reserved to the Imperial Parliament. (Cheers.) If the plan of local administration of local affairs combined with a central organization for common and Imperial purposes had been widely known at that time, and if it had not been discredited by the circumstances under which it had been adopted by the United States, that solution would have been adequate to accomplish every purpose for which William Pitt suggested the necessity. (Hear, hear.) The Union in its incorporate form had been tried and had lamentably failed. (Hear, hear.) It was necessary that the Irish should have a domestic Legislature, and it was not proposed that the Act of Union should be repealed, for it would continue in full force for all proper and legitimate purposes by the free consent of the Irish people.

(Hear, hear.) There was one portion of the speech of the right hon. gentleman which had sounded to him more like the speech of a Fenian head centre, and that was when the right hon. gentleman pointed out that the present measure would not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people. He said that the Irish Parliament would have no control over foreign policy, no power to send ambassadors; that they were restrained from setting up an established religion and from interfering with education, Customs, and trade. The Irish members accepted the provisions which were borrowed from the Constitution of the United States to safeguard these rights, not because they thought those rights would be violated; for he believed that the Irish majority would never, as the minority had done in the dead and evil times, use their rights to do wrong, but as practical men they accepted them without any feeling of degradation or humiliation, as recording what they considered the immutable principles of civil and religious freedom. (Cheers.) It was important from two aspects—it would soothe the apprehensions of those who were really nervous as to the new constitution, and it would have practical application to attempts to transgress either the letter or the spirit of the provisions. Such attempts would furnish a plain excuse for the intervention of the Imperial power. The right hon. gentleman suggested that the measure would be sowing the seed of future demands. What had been the position of this Bill for many years? What had been the constant effort in Ireland? The House was actually asked to believe that an arrangement agreed to by the Irish people as satisfactory, and removing the great cause of complaint which had existed up to the present time, was only sowing the seed of future demands! (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman asked what guarantee there was that the Bill would be accepted as a settlement. It was true that a phrase might be culled from the utterances of a distinguished man now departed to the effect that the Bill of 1886 was only accepted *pro tanto*; but the record of that man's action and speech, as the unquestionable and unchallenged representative of the Irish race in Ireland and beyond the seas, was the record to which attention should be paid (cheers), and that was a record of absolute, unhesitating, and unequivocal acceptance of the Bill of 1886 as a final settlement. (Hear, hear.) The difficulties and delay which had arisen had furnished absolutely satisfactory tests and confirmation of this view. The question had been before the Irish people for seven years, and there had been an unhappy difficulty in Ireland eminently calculated to produce dissatisfaction, if it could be evoked, with the moderation of the Irish demands. He would point to the general acceptance by the Irish all over the world of the present Bill as the best and most satisfactory proof of the finality of that acceptance, on the hypothesis that the statements of the Prime Minister were effectually embodied in the Bill. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman urged that in the case of a struggle with America or France Ireland would be on the side of America or France. But more so or less than now? (Loud cheers.) It was impossible to get absolute securities in respect of the future of countries; but, as far as reason could give a ground for security, there was the absolute assurance that the condition of things as it was before 1886 was infinitely less advantageous to this country in the emergency suggested than it would be after the present Bill had passed. (Cheers.) Then the right hon. gentleman suggested financial difficulties, and put the case of the Irish Parliament refusing the collection of taxes. The Irish revenue was

mainly to consist of excise, and the not too liberal provisions of the Prime Minister would have to be strenuously exercised to get any revenue at all. But the raising of Imperial revenue for Imperial purposes was a different thing. Whatever was essential for the exercise of the taxing power of the common Parliament in which Irishmen were properly represented ought to be given, and no doubt would be given, in the Bill. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman further suggested that volunteers and armed forces might be raised in Ireland. The whole of these suggestions were most baseless and fantastic. (Cheers.) They meant that concord, contentment, and peace between the two countries were to produce a last state of affairs worse than that which the very reverse of those conditions had produced. (Cheers.) During all this time the power to place troops in Ireland and to blockade her ports remained. The only thing that was changed was that the bare idea of the necessity for such action vanished for ever. (Cheers.) On the subject of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, the House had the right hon. gentleman's own record. The right hon. gentleman had repeatedly declared that the continued representation of the Irish people in the Imperial Parliament did effectively produce that supremacy which he now questioned. That was the right hon. gentleman's ground for voting against the Bill of 1886, and now, when Irish representation was conceded, the supremacy withered to nothing before the right hon. gentleman's eyes. (Hear, hear.) Did the right hon. gentleman wish to keep up Dublin Castle and the bureaucratic control of Ireland, which no man had more effectively denounced than he? (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman suggested the case of the Irish Parliament initiating land legislation of which the British Parliament did not approve, and urged that there would be no power to check such legislation. Apart from the land Ireland was in crime abnormally low among the countries of the world. The main lines for the solution of the land problem had now been laid down, and the machinery was ready to hand. It was a gigantic business of detail only now. When the Irish Legislature obtained control of the land with securities—for he was no separatist and no confiscator, and would take no one's property without just compensation—the Irish Legislature would find no occasion for a Plan of Campaign, and if such a movement were started the Legislature, being responsible for peace, order, and good government, would know how to deal with it. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman suggested that large salaries might be paid to ecclesiastics for services not rendered, so as to constitute a practical ecclesiastical endowment. He should regard any such plan as an unworthy artifice to evade the spirit of the law, deserving of the contempt of every honest man, and meriting the stern and speedy intervention of Imperial authority. Under the existing conditions provision was made, without remonstrance from any party, by which those most competent to deal with certain hospitals were appointed to the posts. Was that an iniquitous endowment of religion? (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman remarked that the supremacy of Parliament was "reverently noticed in the preamble." It was not necessary to notice it anywhere. It was unquestioned; and it had been admitted by the right hon. gentleman himself that by the retention of the Irish members that supremacy was an indisputable fact. (Cheers.) He did not object to the repetition of indisputable facts in an Act of Parliament, he did not object to truisms in an Act of Parliament—because he wished that

they were always contained in an Act of Parliament. There was not a man in that House but believed and knew that this Act of Parliament would leave the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament intact in all its parts. (Hear, hear.) But the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament would be used only under conditions in which the obvious intent of the Act meant that it should be used. If the right hon. gentleman suggested that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was to be used in the way of constant, continuous operative review and reconsideration of Irish legislation and administration the last state of Ireland would be worse than the first. (Cheers and counter-cheers.) It would be better in that case that Irishmen should not be called upon to carry out a sham system of self-government free from the responsibility which attached to and could not be divested from substantial power. Nor did the right hon. gentleman himself in days gone by think otherwise, because he had said that the practical control of the Irish people over Irish affairs was an aspiration which he assented to as a reasonable end to be attained. (Hear, hear.) Then as to the veto of the Crown, the normal action as to Bills presented to the Irish Parliament for their assent would be the same as in the Imperial Parliament. The Viceroy, as representing the Queen, would act upon the advice of the Cabinet. The Viceroy would occupy a dual position. He would act ordinarily upon the advice of the Cabinet, but he was also an Imperial officer, and express power was in fact reserved to him to give instructions with regard to any particular Bill, and in case of those instructions being received he would act Ministerially on behalf of the Imperial Parliament. The right hon. gentleman said that that would involve the resignation of the Irish Ministers. He thought not; he thought that it would plant them more firmly in their offices if the power was unwisely used. (Hear, hear.) They could not be called upon to resign for an act for which they were not responsible. The policy of both Imperial Ministers and of the Imperial Parliament ought to be one of non-interference, save in cases where the spirit and letter of the Act under which the Irish Legislature was created was violated. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the protection of minorities, he could say that the rights of the minorities were as dear to Irishmen as they were to Englishmen. (Hear, hear, and cries of "Oh.") The right hon. gentleman had made some suggestions with regard to concurrent legislation. Of course, the Imperial Parliament, having power to carry out concurrent legislation, would have the power to give effect to that legislation, although it was obvious that any step of that kind would be a serious one. The right hon. gentleman offered no guarantee to the hon. member for Waterford that the powers for the protection of the Irish minorities would be used. But Irishmen did not ask for guarantees. They depended upon their own honour and good faith and upon their determination to carry out the conditions of this compact on their part. He believed that the letter and the spirit of this Act of Parliament would be observed by the Irish Parliament, and all that Irishmen asked was that, whilst they observed that letter and spirit, the Imperial Parliament would observe them also. (Hear, hear.) If the Irish Legislature violated that letter and that spirit the Imperial Parliament would have the moral right and actual power to interfere and to redress. The right hon. gentleman suggested that the interference of 80 Irish members would make things difficult in the Imperial Parliament if that power was put into action. But what would 103 Irish representatives in that Imperial Parliament do?

(Hear, hear.) To hear the right hon. gentleman speak it would be supposed that there was no Irish question in existence—that there were no Irish representatives to interfere with the Newcastle programme or with proposals for the settlement of the Irish land question. Let hon. members look at the situation—look at what they had suffered during the last few years. How many Ministries had been made and unmade by the Irish members against the will of the other divisions of the United Kingdom? (Cheers and counter-cheers.) Let them ask themselves, what was the position to-day? What made this Ministry? What could unmake it? (Cheers and counter-cheers.) But hon. members talked as if all this did not exist. (Hear, hear.) The Irish members, voting on Imperial, on English, on Scotch, and on Irish questions, had forced upon successive Ministries the conviction that they must consider what was the best policy they could adopt for Ireland. The result of the action of the Irish representatives had made the position of the Imperial Ministries intolerable; they had found their path obstructed, and had found no peace nor ease. (Hear, hear.) This Bill put forward a plan for reducing the numbers of the Irish members and for reducing their power for mischief, for abstracting from them the power to interfere with all local legislation for England, Scotland, and Wales, and, more than all, for removing the cause for Irish members dealing with those concerns otherwise than upon their merits. (Hear, hear.) Difficulties there possibly might be in the way of attaining the end in view, and no doubt the proposals of the Bill might involve logical inconsistencies; but the English people had never yet been intimidated by logical inconsistency from adopting great and beneficial changes in their Constitution when they had in view the redressing of evils or the conferring of benefits upon the community. (Hear, hear.) He believed that under the new plan the dual Parliament would have the same opportunities of discharging its Imperial duties that it now had. It was true that the Irish members would be subject to some inconvenience in having to come here to take their part in the work of the Imperial Parliament. It was an inconvenience to them, but not to hon. gentlemen opposite, whom he would ask to allow them to bear that inconvenience. (Laughter and cheers.) The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham had pointed out that there would be no relief under the proposed Bill; but he had now indicated that there would, on the contrary, be every relief. If they would not take Home Rule in form they would hereafter have to take it in substance, for, ultimately, English legislation would come to be specially dealt with by Englishmen; Scotch legislation, by Scotchmen; and Welsh legislation, by Welshmen. It would be found in practice that certain other adjustments would furnish good practical solutions of the enormous mass of theoretical objections put forward by the opponents of this Home Rule scheme. It was urged that the Parliamentary system under the new plan was to work only by corruption; but had the right hon. gentleman and his friends never before heard of Irish grants? (Cheers.) Why, what had been the course adopted by this country towards Ireland for years past? They had been trying to placate her with sops. With regard to the protection of minorities, he rejoiced to know that there was in the minds of the Liberal party a trust which was well founded in the honesty and good faith and equity of the great majority of the Irish people. He rejoiced to think that the restrictions were not proposed in a form and with allusions which

would make them degrading to, and would render them difficult of acceptance by, the Irish people. The Liberal party said that they reposed confidence in Irishmen; that confidence would not be abused. The Government said to them—Agree to the insertion in this Bill of provisions which are, after all, only the recorded declarations of the true principles of liberty; which are inconsistent with the exercise of tyranny by a majority over the minority, and which recognize the sacred rights of individuals. They therefore freely agreed to the insertion of these safeguards. He regarded this as a great advance, and hon. members having recorded certain principles of civil and religious liberty as fit and proper to be applied to Ireland, might some day feel themselves able to apply these principles to themselves. (Lead cheers.) He would not argue with the right hon. gentleman the question of minorities, in reference to religion and education, because the principles to be adopted received the *imprimatur* of the right hon. gentleman himself in a printed plac. He would set the right hon. gentleman in print against the right hon. gentleman in speech. The right hon. gentleman had also referred to the land question and to the restrictive periods in reference to other matters. What would happen if this Bill were not to pass? They would have these questions with them not for three years, but for all time. (Lead cheers.) The Bill also suggested machinery for compensation. The member for West Birmingham thought that the Second Chamber which was to be constituted was no use, and said that he would like to vote against it; but the Second Chamber to be now constituted was very much better than the one proposed in the former Bill. The present measure recognized the principle of election, though the franchise was, in its case, necessarily of a restricted character, seeing the duties which that Chamber would be called upon to perform. It was, in fact, designed to give reasonable protection to the minority in Ireland; and it afforded two opportunities, each of the greatest value—first, full debate and discussion by an elected body; and, secondly, by preventing the popular Chamber from insisting absolutely upon any measure by giving it a joint vote. Thus it did not oppose an absolute bar to the settled will of the people of Ireland; if it did he confessed it would be absolutely intolerable. The Bill would afford ample opportunity for Parliament and this country to consider any particular matter, and afforded full security against rash, hasty, or ill-considered legislation. The right hon. gentleman had spoken of Ulster. He had never been able to understand the deep interest that English people took in Ulster. ("Oh.") He would tell them why he said this. If there were a part of Ireland which would be able to take care of itself in the Dublin Parliament that part was Ulster. Whether it was on account of the numbers of its population, or by reason of its intelligence, its education, its property, or its enterprise, Ulster was absolutely capable of taking care of itself (cheers)—not by these violent institutions and rebellious methods which had been heard of as existing there, but by taking part and lot with the rest of its fellow-countrymen in the deliberations of its own Assembly, and by uniting in an effort to make Ireland what she ought to be. (Cheers.) Ireland did not demand separation; but the leader of the Opposition, having lost his power to coerce, thought fit to exercise his power to taunt Irish members, and found no more generous name for their country than no "arbitrarily selected area," telling them that that arbitrarily selected area had no better

right or claim to demand Home Rule than a fragment of one of her own provinces. The right hon. gentleman ignored the immutable decrees of Providence, which had given to Ireland a boundary the most distinct and marked that could be conceived—the streak of inviolate sea. (Hear, hear.) He ignored the history of an ancient kingdom and passed by the treachery and usurpation by which she had been cheated out of her rights. (Hear, hear.) But that country, no arbitrarily selected area, was one country after all, and one country would remain; and he believed Protestant Ulster would scorn the suggestion that she should part her fortunes from the remainder of the island. (Nationalist cheers.) The whole policy of the right hon. gentleman was based upon a most pessimistic view; but he himself believed in a better future for Ireland. (Nationalist cheers.) Let them not deny in action the possibility of the supplications which they made at the commencement of their deliberations, that Almighty God would be graciously pleased to guide their counsels, and to unite together all persons in these realms in true Christian love and charity. Let them now and henceforward bend their energies in that direction, and he believed that towards that result the first and most vital step would be to turn this Bill into law. (At the call of Mr. W. O'Brien, the whole of the Nationalist members rose in their places and cheered the hon. member when he resumed his seat.)

Mr. COURTNEY welcomed the hon. member who had just spoken, and expressed admiration of the character and ability displayed in his speech, and the belief that the hon. gentleman would rapidly reach a position not unworthy to be compared with that which he filled in the great Dominion. (Cheers.) He hoped that he might be permitted to address the House, because he had never yet spoken on this question in the House. That was the first time he had spoken there on Irish affairs, at least in connexion with the great Constitutional change which was proposed in 1886, and which was revived in this Bill. He was in entire agreement with the hon. member that this was a grave and weighty matter, and that it could not be dismissed lightly—that the Irish question had been not only a perplexity to past generations, but was a difficulty which we inherited to-day; but he differed from the hon. member in thinking that the question was now, or had recently been, of the gravity which it formerly possessed. He differed altogether from him in supposing that they were not approaching the solution of the difficulty, and that the solution would not have been possible without entering on a question of grave organic change. The Union had done a great work. His right hon. friend the leader of the House had referred, not for the first time, to the fact that when the Act of Union was in contemplation the Protestant population of Ulster were foremost in their opposition to it. Now, the right hon. gentleman confessed with some regret that that population were in favour of it. The Act of Union had done some work even if it had only brought the people of Ireland into union with the people of Great Britain, but it had done more. The Act of Union had worked not to bring the whole population of the sister island into that feeling of amity which they would fain realize, but had operated to make the spirit of union among those who held position, whether by wealth, by education, by professional *status*, or otherwise, friendly and strong towards the people of Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) That had been done under the Act of Union, followed

up by the action of an assembly still somewhat aristocratic, and at the best animated by the middle-class opinions and the middle-class sympathies of this island. The upper and middle classes of the two populations had been brought into union through the operation of the Act of Union. Up till the general election which followed the late Reform Bill the right hon. gentleman the leader of the House admitted that there was no Parliamentary demand for a reconsideration of the question of dimensions which required his attention; but when they had a democratic assembly brought in by household suffrage in town and country they naturally produced in the Irish representation a representation of the *nouvelles couches*, which had hitherto been but feebly represented there. They had brought before them in striking demonstration the representation of the classes, and, without waiting to see what the operation of a reformed Parliament would be, they at once rushed to the conclusion that it was necessary to enter into this question of organic change. It would have been well to wait and see whether the operation of the new electorate, speaking through new representatives, would not have brought the whole population of Ireland into the same agreement with the population of Great Britain as under the operation of the Parliament elected under the Constitution of 1832 they had brought the middle classes of Ireland into harmony with the middle classes of Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) For this reason he had always thought that the action taken by his right hon. friend the leader of the House in 1886 was a hurried and an impatient action. (Cheers.) He should have waited to see what was the view of this Parliament before proceeding to rend it twain. (Hear, hear.) Other counsels were adopted by the right hon. gentleman, and they had now to consider what was put before them. What was Home Rule? What was it that was demanded? Home Rule meant the election of a Parliament which would have complete control over Irish affairs and a Ministry which would be responsible to an Irish Parliament. If that were the true description of Home Rule, was it so far wrong on the part of the noble lord the member for Paddington to say the previous night that Home Rule meant the repeal of the Union? (Hear, hear.) It was quite true that it did not mean the repeal of the Union by setting up the Parliament which existed in Ireland, in its corrupt boroughs and in its peerage, before the Act of Union was passed; but it did represent the repeal of the Union in this, that it made the Legislature and the Administration in Ireland independent of any influence of Great Britain and independent of any control or supervision on the part of the Imperial Parliament. (Cheers.) Here he agreed with the hon. member for South Longford, who had practically confessed that the safeguard of the veto was perfectly worthless. The hon. member said that it would never be used (cries of "No, no") except in relation to the affairs intrusted to the Irish Parliament, and unless that Parliament acted in some most abnormal and extraordinary way which the hon. member believed would never arise. That was a confession that the veto would never be exercised because it would never be wanted. (Cheers.) But he would go further than this—that, wanted or not, it would never be used. He appealed to the experience of the hon. member himself as to the relations between the Imperial Government and the colonies, not only in Canada, but in Australia, to prove that with respect to the affairs committed to the charge of the Colonial Legislature,

however much the action of that Legislature might appear to be injudicious or wrong, or even unjust, to the Government at home, the Government at home did not and practically could not recommend the exercise of the veto when the action was confined to affairs which were committed to the Colonial Government. The question had occurred again and again. When the Australian Government in New South Wales took action with respect to the admission of Chinese—action which was in some respects in violation of our treaty relations—the Home Government remonstrated and attempted to use some influence to have this policy counteracted, but in vain; and it was recognized at home that, having committed that power to the local Government, it was impossible to interfere with that power. The same thing had occurred with reference to New Zealand over and over again; and with reference to Queensland the discussions were well known which took place on the question of the Kanaka traffic. It was felt that the proposals to renew that traffic were full of danger, but it was impossible for the Government at home to exercise any influence by way of recommending that a veto should be placed on any legislation of that kind, because it lay in the sphere of the business committed to the Colonial Government. How, then, could the veto be carried into effect by any attempt this country made to use it? That was a practical consideration in respect of our colonies, and if this country once conceded a Parliament to Ireland it would be practically impossible to assert the veto if it attempted to use it, for the Irish Parliament and the Irish Administration would insist on the maintenance of the law, and there would be a deadlock brought about between the two Governments, neither being able to carry out its wishes; and the whole thing would thus end in confusion. (Cheers.) There was also the question of reserving matters for consideration at Westminster, and the question of the land. He said generally with respect to the reservation of legislative power within matters which were local that such reservations could not be maintained. He did not see how the question of reserving legislation with respect to land for three years could be worked even if this Bill became law. There must be some dealings with land going on in Ireland. At this moment a cry had been heard from Ulster on the land question, and there was another cry from the South and West of Ireland with respect to judicial rents. Were all these questions to be arrested; could they be arrested? It was impossible to have a stagnation of land legislation in the course of three years, and it was impossible for the British Parliament to undertake within that time any settlement which would meet the case concurrently with this Bill. The exceptions with respect to land and commerce from the legislative power of the Irish Parliament would be mischievous as long as the reservations were made. The great question to consider, however, was this:—If the Government set up this Parliament in Ireland, if they intrusted to it the powers which were now proposed to be given to it, and if the power of veto with respect to the legislative powers was one which would be inoperative in respect of their action—then the Government had to consider what would be the probable character of the dangers incidental to the setting up of such a Legislature. In this connexion they had to take into account the recent history of Ireland (cheers) and to consider the dangers which would follow the setting up of a Parliament with Ireland in the position in which she was now, as well as the character of the

Legislature it was proposed to set up. As to the Legislature, he confessed that he did not know what would be the representation in what was known as the Upper House or Legislative Council. He did not know whether the 40 gentlemen elected would represent property, the classes, or what; but he saw that if the present 103 members were transferred to Dublin, and even if the 40 were unanimous, they would be outvoted. They were not able, even acting with perfect unanimity, to withstand the majority of the joint assemblies so constituted. It was important also to consider what would be the character of the Representative Assembly, the Lower House in Dublin. The Government were going to take the constituencies as they existed, and they proposed to transfer the same constituencies and have a body of persons elected as the present members were. The security of the veto was worthless; the security of the Upper House was probably equally so; and if the Government were going to produce any securities in Ireland for the good government of Ireland it must not rest in securities provided from without, but in securities provided from within. The only true security which the Government could offer for the future government of Ireland was the constitution of an Assembly which should always contain within itself a sufficient representation of the moderation, judgment, and character of the best portions of the Irish population, so that they should be able to raise a remonstrance which could not be neglected and which might lead to the prevention of injudicious or unjust legislation. He was glad to read in *The Times* that morning (ironical cheers) a telegram giving the views of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, who had said that the weakness of the proposed Constitution of Ireland lay in the Assembly. If they had really to take up the task of constructing a Constitution for Ireland, the present representation of Ireland must not be taken with its present constituencies and transferred to the other side of St. George's Channel. They must undertake such a reform as would secure to the Lower House of the Irish Parliament securities and safeguards which could not be found by any provision or safeguard on this side of the Channel. He did not imagine that they could have illegal action on the part of the Irish Parliament, but what they did apprehend, especially having regard to the representation of Ireland here, at least a faithful representation of what might be expected by a transfer of the representatives of the same constituencies from Westminster to Dublin; and having regard to the recent history of Ireland, the confusion, the hostility, the alleged wrongs perpetrated on one side and the other—these things must be remembered when the Government were constructing their Irish Constitution; and it was in constructing the House of Assembly that the whole future legislation of Ireland depended, and by it the character of the Constitution would be altogether determined. (Cheers.) He would submit one or two suggestions. There was a great demand for the revision of rents. Had they any security that the Irish Parliament would not legislate for the reduction of rent all over Ireland? During three years after the passing of the Bill, no doubt, the Irish Parliament was forbidden from legislating with respect to land; but, after that time, what security would there be against wholesale revision and wholesale reduction? Such legislation would be wholly beyond the exercise of the veto here. Then they might have taxation partial in its effects. They had had a good deal of that in the history of the Imperial Legislature. Was there any security that it was not

an evil into which the Irish Parliament might easily run? Again, whatever authority the Imperial Parliament might have over Irish legislation, Irish administration would be absolutely free from their control; and they might have a one-sided administration not corrected by a minority in the Assembly capable of standing up for equity and justice in the conduct of that administration. They were always led to the conclusion that the future of Ireland would depend upon the character of the Assembly. If they were going to undertake this labour, the Government must address themselves to the constitution of the Legislative Assembly, because, unless it were animated by a sense of justice, unless it had a sufficient minority to stand up for, those who would be subject to the legislation of the majority, they would have no confidence as to what would be the character of that legislation, and they had no power to arrest or correct it. The scheme foreshadowed in the Bill was, in his opinion, badly constructed with respect to Ireland itself; the Legislature was not one that they could safely launch and invest with powers. But it was badly constructed also with respect to Great Britain. Enough had probably been said upon the effect in the House of Commons of the in-and-out method of bringing Irish members there. This plan appeared to him to combine all the disadvantages that would accrue from cutting Ireland entirely adrift and none of the advantages which they would get from that relief; to combine all the disadvantages which would accrue from the adoption of the Federal system and none of the advantages which they should get from that relief. It was bad on both sides. What they would realize would be infinite confusion in the position of the Ministry of the day. The right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister in his speech mentioned a proposal which had not attracted much attention, but which appeared to be a gratuitous addition to the inconveniences which would result from this plan. He said a Bill might be brought in relating to Great Britain, but it would be possible for an Irish member to move that it should extend to Ireland, and if that motion were adopted the future conduct of the Bill would be, of course, subject to the whole Imperial House. He was not sure that the interest taken by an Irish member in a Bill had not sometimes been an interest taken in it for the purpose of preventing it from passing. It had been avowed that the way to prevent a Bill from being passed was to manifest an interest in it, and it would be sufficient to move that a Bill should extend to Ireland to get a foothold which would enable those who so moved to wreck the Bill altogether. What was the reason for this extraordinary provision? Suppose the Bill were a good Bill, and it were agreeable to Irish feelings that its provision should be adopted in Ireland, why should not a similar measure be passed by the Irish Legislature? Why should Irish members be brought to Westminster to interrupt the progress of legislation there? (Cheers.) There was one subject on which opinion on this side of the water was nearly unanimous, but which did not meet with general support on the other side—namely, the admission of accused persons to give evidence on their own behalf in criminal cases. An hon. and learned member opposite had manifested a great interest in a Bill on that subject for the purpose of preventing it from passing. If under that new system that Bill was brought in and confined to Great Britain it would be possible for that hon. member to interfere with its being adopted by Great Britain under the form of wishing to have it applied to Ireland, while, if he really wanted its principle applied to Ireland,

it would be only necessary to introduce a similar measure into the Irish Parliament. He was totally unable to see the reason for this extraordinary aggravation of the difficulty which would arise. He would point out a minor consequence of that aggravation. A good many years had been spent in trying to simplify the statutes of the British Parliament. The Irish Parliament would no doubt like to see their laws in as compact a form as possible. But where would the Irish lawyer of the future find his law? It would be in statutes passed by the Irish Parliament; it would also be in statutes introduced into the Imperial Parliament for British purposes, but made, by subsequent motion, applicable throughout the whole kingdom. With regard to the scheme of taxation he confessed it was extremely obscure to him, but he conceived that a scheme of legislation which, while giving Ireland a Legislature, admitted Irish members to the Imperial Parliament was most dangerous in respect of taxation. The Customs duties, he understood, were to be levied by Imperial officers; and the Excise duties were to be levied by Irish officers. What he did not quite understand with respect to the Excise revenue was whether, if the duty was paid in Ireland on whisky which was consumed in England, that duty would form part of the Irish revenue.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—You will find it clearly set out in the Bill.

Mr. COURTNEY said he could see that this was a matter of very considerable embarrassment and of very considerable intricacy. If duty paid in Ireland was to be accounted for to the consuming country it would involve something very like watching over the trade in this particular commodity between Great Britain and Ireland. This was a matter which was likely to lead to some dispute between the two Governments. He was still more impressed as to the property tax. That was to be levied by each country for its own purposes. If they were going to deal with these matters at all, the object should be the complete separation of the revenues of the two countries, so as to avoid altogether the question of contributions from one to the other, above all when that was connected with the representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament. They had a reference last night to the experience of Argentina, but they had experience much nearer home. What had been the secret of the good relations which exist between this country and its colonies? It was that the colonies made no contributions whatever; that there were no monetary relations whatever with them. It was absolutely impossible that they could look after the Custom duties levied in Australia or Canada, and the consequence was that friendly relations had been maintained between England and her colonies. Look, also, at the United States. How was it that the Constitution of the United States worked so smoothly for 100 years? One principal reason was that there never had been any pecuniary relations between the Federal Government and the States. The States had been thrown on their own resources entirely. The Federal revenue had been quite independent of the States in respect to money. There was the case of New Zealand, which had provincial Governments and a central Government, and the greatest jealousy arose as to the money relations between the two, some of the provinces complaining that others got a larger share of money for public works than they received. The hon. member who had preceded him would not challenge his statement that the weak point, the unsatisfactory part of the working of the Constitution of the

Canadian Federation, had been the money relations. It had not been free from the temptation to intrigue, and, he might say, the temptation to jobbery, by the allocation of money from the central Government to the provincial Government. The proposal of the Government would set up a system which would involve all these dangers, and aggravate them with the presence of 80 Irish members in that House. Were they bound to undertake this work? He did not believe they were. (Hear, hear.) They were going on well. ("Oh.") Yea; and with patience they should have gone on better. But if they were bound to undertake it, they ought, in the construction of the Irish Parliament, to take guarantees for the good government of Ireland; and as to the money relations, if they were to have money relations between the Imperial Government and the Irish Government, those relations should be relations which could not be modified, but relations which could only be negotiated between the two Governments possessing the confidence of the English and the Irish people, and altogether independent of all recourse to the votes of the Irish members. The experience of the United States, their own experience in relation to the colonies, showed the beneficial results secured by avoiding these money relations; while the experience of New Zealand and Canada showed the extreme danger of entering into a course which would make an allocation of money between the central Government and a provincial Parliament part of the scheme. These two questions on which he had dwelt were, he confessed, two faults in the construction of the Bill which they were now asked to sanction in its introduction. They were radical faults and could not be met except by the reconstruction of the Bill. For his part he could not admit that any cause had arisen for the construction of any such scheme as that now before them. (Hear, hear.) They had gone on for 80 years with steady beneficial progress. ("Oh," and "Hear, hear.") Steady beneficial progress. ("No, no.") The Parliament of the United Kingdom had captured the upper strata of the Irish society. ("No, no.") He could only repeat his opinion.

Mr. LITTLE.—I am an Irishman and an Irish Protestant, and I do say that this Parliament has not captured the upper strata of Irish society. (Irish cheers.)

Mr. COURTNEY said whereas the Union at the outset was opposed by high and low Protestants as well as Catholics, the operation of the united Parliament went to capture more and more the upper classes and the upper strata of Irish society, and if they had gone on longer they should have had considerable hope in the operations of that democratized assembly of bringing about a complete reconciliation. (Cheers.) He did not wish to say anything which would be offensive to any member of that House, but when he contrasted the prospects under the Irish Parliament and under the Imperial Parliament he could have no hesitation in expressing his opinion that they should have better chances of justice to all parties in Ireland under the existing system than under the proposed Bill. (Cheers.) The Imperial Parliament held the balance between the two people. (Irish ironical cheers.) Had it not cut down the powers of the landlords? He, for his part, could see no prospect of the proposed Parliament holding the balance as it had been justly held by the Imperial Parliament. If they were to break up the United Kingdom, if they were to give Ireland a new Constitution, they must proceed on different lines from those adopted in the Government Bill. They must construct a different

Assembly, and produce a scheme of an entirely different character to govern the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BODKIN said he expected when the right hon. member for West Birmingham rose to speak that he would have called the attention of the Speaker to a point of order, for though the House was ostensibly discussing Home Rule, the right hon. member had said that Home Rule was as dead as Queen Anne, and if that was so it was hardly consistent with the honour and dignity of the House that it should have occupied three or four days in discussing a corpse. (Laughter.) But the right hon. gentleman and the Tory party, with whom he consistently acted, would find that Home Rule, as Mr. Mantalini had said, was "a damned unpleasant corpse" (laughter), and it was hardly generous of the right hon. gentleman now to come down to the House and triumph over the dead body of a principle which he had once advocated. But the constituency of Walsall had just proved that Home Rule was not dead. (Hear, hear.) He contended that there had been a social revolution in England on the Home Rule question. It was not a scratch vote, it was not to the conversion of Scotland or Wales, that the First Lord of the Treasury owed his return to power, but to the conversion of the great electorate of England. He was proceeding to make an attack on the Liberal Unionist party and its leader in this House when he was interrupted by the Speaker, who said the hon. member was not in any way dealing with the Bill before the House. Having apologized, the hon. member remarked that there were two alternative taunts hurled at Irishmen. If they were in a state of agitation they were told they would get nothing until they were quiet, and if they were quiet they were told they would get nothing until they agitated. Ireland was peaceful at present because Ireland had hope. (Cheers.) One of the objections to the Bill was founded on the threats of civil war by the hon. members from Ulster and the lining of the ditches. He acquitted his hon. friend (Mr. Johnston) of any bloodthirsty intentions, and he wished that all the Ulster members were as loyal to their opinions as his hon. friend. Ulstermen and other Irishmen would get on very well together, and when hon. members talked of "lining the ditches" he believed that they meant lining their breeches-pocket. (A laugh.) The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham was hardly within his right when he taunted the Chancellor of the Duchy with having laughed at Orange bluster. The right hon. gentleman himself said at Newcastle, on January 13, 1884, that with boasted professions of their devotion to the Crown the Orangemen insulted and defied the representatives of the Crown in Ireland, and they broke the laws while they pretended to defend them; and he added that he believed if there was any danger to the peace of Ireland it was from the loyal section of Ulster, led by men of rank and education, who knew enough to know better, and who had been stimulated into almost unreasoning ferocity by the mild eloquence of the leader of the Opposition, meaning the late Sir Stafford Northcote. But the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham was now trying his hand at stimulating the Orangemen into unreasoning ferocity. (Hear, hear.) He ventured to think that when the time came Ulster would be loyal to the Irish Government in a truer and better spirit than it had ever been before. Ulstermen had repudiated the idea of separation from the rest of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) To paraphrase a well-known phrase, Ulster would sit tight and Ulster would be

right. (A laugh.) They were told that the whole proceedings of that House would be futile because the House of Lords would block the Bill. He did not think there was any danger of that; if they did they would tumble like a house of cards.

The SPEAKER.—I must remind the hon. member that it is out of order to speak disrespectfully of the other House of Parliament. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BODKIN said he bowed to the ruling of the right hon. gentleman, but he was only arguing that the Lords had no right to block the will of the people. The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham in "Plain Words to the Peers" had said:—"I am rather thankful than otherwise to gentlemen who will take the trouble of wearing robes and keeping up a certain state of splendour. They are ancient monuments and I, for one, would be very sorry to deface them. But I do not admit that we can build upon these interesting ruins the foundations of our Government."

The SPEAKER.—The hon. gentleman is transgressing the rule that I laid down, and I now warn him.

Mr. BODKIN said that he was quoting the words of the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham.

The SPEAKER.—He is quoting words not used in this House.

Mr. BODKIN said he wished before he concluded to draw attention to a statement made by the right hon. member for West Birmingham with reference to the question of the nationality of the people of Ireland—that "arbitrarily selected area," selected by the Almighty without any previous consultation with the right hon. member or his private secretary. (Laughter.) Speaking in 1883 the right hon. gentleman said:—"Our task will never be completed until you have succeeded by just and equal laws and wise administration in enlisting on the side of the English Government and the English people the interest and influence of the bulk of the Irish nation." When the right hon. gentleman uttered those words did he think that the Irish people were not a nation? There was a time, now past, when hatred of England was part of the creed of Irish nationality. They fought in those days for freedom and vengeance; they were fighting now for freedom and friendship. It would be well for England to have the Irish nation her friend when trouble should come. Let the Irish wolfdog and the British bulldog hunt in couples, and there was no game in the world strong enough to withstand them. (Laughter.)

"Come the four quarters of the world in arms,

"And we will shock them."

Mr. RENTOUL, who characterized the measure as the most important that had been submitted to the House during the present century, said that it had been introduced by a statesman whose knowledge of Ireland was rather partial and onesided. This measure, great for evil or great for good, having been brought in, the best thing they could do was to discuss it with as little personal bitterness as possible. He was opposed to the measure, but he hoped he would be believed when he said that in his opposition he was influenced by no selfish motive. There were two classes of Irishmen who were supposed to be incapable of impartiality in political matters—namely, Orangemen and landlords. He did not himself belong to the Orange organization, and he was not a landlord, his ancestors when they owned land having, like so many Irishmen, tried to solve the problem how to live on four times the amount of their income, and the usual unsatisfactory results having followed. (A laugh.) The 23 Unionist members from Ireland were

habitually referred to as if they were landlords, but as a matter of fact only three out of this number were present Irish landlords and two of them possible future landlords. Having, he hoped, shown that he was not open to the imputation of partiality, he proposed to state the reasons that caused him to oppose the Bill. In the first place it proposed to do that which had never been done before by any nation on the face of the earth. England's greatest philosopher, who was also a great statesman and lawyer—Lord Bacon—had, in his *Essay on Innovation*, said:—"It is good also not to try experiments in States, except the necessity be urgent or the utility evident." The Bill was, no doubt, an experiment. Was its necessity urgent or its utility evident? (Hear, hear.) Its necessity was clearly not immediately urgent, for past and present Chief Secretaries and their followers had lately been vying with each other in pointing out the absolute peace that had reigned in Ireland during the last seven years. Again, with regard to the financial position of Ireland, in spite of the momentary depression of agricultural produce, which had hit England more heavily than Ireland, Irish farmers were, and had been during the past few years, in a very prosperous condition, much more so than English farmers. (Nationalist cries of "No, no.") Well, he was giving his own experience. It could not be said that on either of these grounds the Bill was urgent. Was its utility evident? No speaker, whether Gladstonian or Home Ruler, had yet, so far as he could gather, attempted to point out in what way the Bill would be useful to Ireland as regarded its financial prosperity. It was said that it would give contentment to the Irish people. Manifestly it would not give contentment to the Unionist portion, who formed one-third of the Irish people. ("Hear, hear"; a voice, "One-fourth.") He maintained that the number was one-third, but when Irishmen got into fractions it became impossible for them to agree. (Laughter.) There was in any event a large minority that would not be contented with the Bill, but would be rendered desperately discontented by it. With regard to the remaining portion he was not sure how the contentment would work out. If the hon. member for North Louth were in power as Prime Minister in an Irish Parliament, he did not think entire contentment would be felt by the hon. member for Waterford and his followers; if, on the other hand, the hon. member for Waterford were in power, and had against his Government some of the members who were opposed to him at the present time, he was afraid there would be considerable shadows of discontent passing over the horizon. (Hear, hear.) He did not believe in extracts from newspapers of speeches made years ago; but if he were in the Liberal party he would have the courage to say, "I did say these things years ago, but I have changed my mind." He had, therefore, nothing to do with the past either of the right hon. member for West Birmingham or of the Prime Minister. One thing which did, however, weigh with him was the conduct of other nations. There was not a single nation in the world whose conduct had not been absolutely in an opposite direction to that proposed by the Bill. Italy, which only a score of years ago was divided into several different kingdoms, had been united into one entire kingdom, and the feeling of the many Italians with whom he had been brought in contact was that the unification of their country was the most glorious thing that had ever happened. Take the case of France. There was a strong

reason why La Vendée should have been cut off from the rest of that country, for it was strongly Catholic and loyalist when Paris was Republican and atheistic, and yet the revolt in La Vendée was crushed out and she was compelled to give way. Every man would admit that France, from a constitutional point of view, was quite right, and it would have been disastrous to her if she had allowed La Vendée to form itself into a separate kingdom. In America the Southern States claimed the right to separate from the others, and took the field and fought heroically. The result was that the Northern States prevailed; they preserved the Union and crushed down the revolt, and there was no man now who did not say that it was well that such an event had happened. As to the opinions of other nations, and especially of America, on this matter, his answer would be, "We do not want your opinion; we want your action. Did you give Home Rule to the Southern States?" (Hear, hear.) There was no half-way house in this matter between a united Parliament and total separation. He knew two or three barristers who, when they were opposed to him in the Courts, were in the habit of taking him aside and giving him friendly advice as to how he should conduct his case. He always listened attentively, and whatever they told him he invariably did the opposite, and he found that he was generally right. (Laughter.) In the same way, he should be very chary of taking advice from the United States. He was opposed to the Bill also from his sincere respect for the great Liberal party of the country and for their intelligence and ability. (Cries of "Oh," and laughter.) The leaders and oldest members of the Liberal party had been once desperately and mortally opposed to Home Rule; and indeed it was from their speeches that the best arguments against Home Rule were to be derived. Another reason for opposing Home Rule was the present condition of the United Kingdom. When things were bad a change might be desirable; but in no country in the world had the progress in wealth been so rapid as in England during the present century. The wealth per head of the English population was £290; and in Scotland it was even higher—£307 per head. Therefore every Scotchman who had left Scotland to settle in England had lost £17 by the transaction. (Loud laughter.) Then Ireland was the most prosperous country of all. (Nationalist laughter.) The information of hon. members who laughed was taken from the constituencies which they represented; his information was taken from the constituency which he represented. (Hear, hear.) Belfast was the most prosperous city in the whole of Europe, and no other city had increased so rapidly in the last 50 years, either in wealth or population. Last year Belfast turned out the largest tonnage of ships of any port, and some of the best vessels afloat were Belfast built. Cork had greater natural advantages as a port than Belfast, but how was it that it had not progressed at the same rate? The reason was to be found in the contrast between the industry, law-abidingness, and content of Belfast and the discontent of rebel Cork. On matters political he was always willing to take the advice of people outside the political sphere. The opinion of a politician was always to be distrusted. (Laughter.) Last night, after a certain speech, he went into the lobby, and met a political friend of the speaker, who said, "Was it not masterly?" Then he met an opponent, who said, "Poor fellow, I was really sorry for him." (Laughter.) The vast majority of the

dispassionate men, the great poets and historians and literary men, were dead against Home Rule. Tennyson, Froude, Matthew Arnold, Huxley, Sir F. Leighton, Swinburne—the list of great names could be continued indefinitely almost. His next objection to the Bill was the mental state of those who would form the majority in the Irish Parliament. (Laughter.) He did not imply that there was anything weak in their mental state—he would leave the two parties to say that of each other. (Laughter.) But the best indication was the Meath election petitions. The hon. and learned member for North Louth appeared as counsel at the hearing of those petitions—and, fortunately, in England it was not the practice for politicians to conduct political cases (hear, hear)—and the hon. member summed up the whole case in one phrase. He said, "The right of private judgment is the right of private stupidity." What did any hon. gentleman of great ability and high education, such as the hon. member for South Donegal, think of that doctrine in relation to his own constituents? (Laughter.) In his opinion the right of private judgment was one of the most valuable rights that a man could possess. (Hear, hear.) To a mild man like himself it was most startling, it was most horrifying, it was most frightening to be told that if the hon. members near him were to be placed in power in Ireland he should not be allowed to exercise the right of private judgment. (Hear, hear.) He was afraid that if those hon. members attained power they would make short work of men like himself. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) But the next element was the unbusinesslike ideas of the Irish Home Rulers. On July 6 last the whole of the walls of Belfast were placarded with "Vote for Sexton, your only member." ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) He had the greatest respect for the courtesy, the amiability, and the ability of the hon. gentleman, and it would be audacious for such an humble member of that House as himself even to compliment him, but as one of the crowd he could not help expressing his admiration for the judicious speech which the hon. member had made upon the subject of this Bill. But surely it was unbusinesslike to assert that the hon. member was the only member for Belfast. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) For all these reasons he was compelled earnestly and emphatically to oppose the policy of Home Rule. (Hear, hear.) The Irish Nationalist members claimed to be exclusively the representatives of the people of Ireland. The hon. member for North Kerry had given the House the assurance that the Irish Legislature of the future would not desire to inflict injustice upon any one in Ireland. Surely such a declaration as that was the outcome of the hon. member's private stupidity. ("Hear, hear," and laughter, and cries of "No.") Well, how was an ignorant man like himself to know whether such a declaration was the outcome of the hon. member's private stupidity or whether he had made it at the dictation of his priest? (Hear, hear.) As the hon. member was not entitled to exercise the right of private stupidity he must have been authorized to make that declaration by his priest. (Hear, hear.) It was no fault of his that he was a blustering, noisy Ulsterman. That was the exact phrase used by the Chancellor of the Duchy. Why did he not tell the House that he was an Ulsterman himself? The right hon. gentleman carefully concealed that fact from the House. The right hon. gentleman was a member of a very celebrated Ulster family, but all the members of that family were dead against him upon the Home Rule

question, and a brother of his had written one of the cleverest books that had been published upon the subject in order to do away with the evil influence of his relative. (Laughter.) So that the Chancellor of the Duchy, who wanted to speak for Ulster, could not even speak for his own family. No 23 members taken at random from the House were returned by such large majorities as were the 23 Irish Unionist members. The word "blustering" meant "leading to assume, in manner and language, a power and responsibility for which there is no foundation"; but if any men had a right to speak in the name of the constituencies which they represented, the 23 Irish Unionists were so entitled. Was it possible to speak out more powerfully in the same direction than Ulster did last June—and would, he hoped, speak again? Then, as to the epithet "noisy." All that was loud was not necessarily noisy. The word implied a want of harmony; but could any 23 members be found more in harmony with one another than he and his 22 friends? (Cheers.) He thought the right hon. gentleman should express his sorrow for what he had said. Although an Ulsterman himself, the right hon. gentleman did not represent an Ulster constituency, for obvious reasons. (Laughter.) The Unionists did not believe that they had any right to break up an Empire which was founded, not by themselves, but by their forefathers; and in that belief they were now opposing, and would continue to endeavour to defeat, this or any other scheme of separation and Home Rule. (Cheers.)

Mr. S. WALLACE said that, as a new member, he had not intended to interpose in this debate, but for the challenge which fell from one of the hon. members for Tyrone, and which had been emphasized by the last speaker. Under present circumstances, however, he felt bound, as an Ulsterman (cheers)—one who possessed a considerable stake in that part of Ireland—to stand up and let the House know that which the members from Ulster had kept back—namely, a true statement of the feeling which prevailed there. So strongly did he feel that the proposal to confer Home Rule upon Ireland would be for the benefit and prosperity of the country that within the past three months he had considerably added to his property in Belfast (cheers), being fully persuaded that his stake in that town would increase in value under a Home Rule Government. (Ironical laughter and cheers.) Hon. gentlemen behind him might laugh, but it was so. He would first like to refer to the statement of the leader of the House in reference to the Protestants of Ulster and the men of 1798. He was a grandson of a '98 man (cheers), who, in his turn, was descended from honest and honourable sheep-stealers from the south of Scotland. (Loud laughter.) Yes; that was at a time when the practice was considered an honest and honourable occupation in Scotland, and the only inconvenience which attached to those who practised it was that, if caught, they were hanged on the spot. (Renewed laughter.) He hoped he inherited some of the sense of his ancestors. (Loud laughter.) As to the reiterated assertion that the Protestants of Ulster were opposed to Home Rule, he might say that he had the honour of being the vice-president of the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association, which hon. members had said very little about in the House. He did not deny the high position occupied by Messrs. Harland and Wolff in Belfast, but neither of them was an Ulsterman. (Laughter.) He had himself been present in the office of the Home Rule Association in Belfast when Messrs. Harland and Wolff's own ship

carpenters had come by night and asked to be enrolled in the Protestant Home Rule Association on the condition that their names were never to be published, and that their subscriptions to the association were to be acknowledged under initials, so that they might not lose their employment. ("Oh.") These men were enrolled, and he and the secretary pledged their honour that it should never be revealed in public that they were members of the association. Merchants of Belfast had also told him in private that they sympathized with his views, and, therefore, it was wrong to assume that the whole of the Protestants of the town were against Home Rule. (Nationalist cheers.) As far as he was concerned, Home Rule was the particular plank on which he fought the constituency of Limehouse, and on every occasion when he had attended the meetings of other English candidates Home Rule had received the same prominent consideration. The arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite resolved themselves into this—that there were no special reasons, no privileges, appertaining to Ulster why she should have prospered more than any other portion of Ireland. (Opposition cheers.) He was very glad to find that he had not misunderstood the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite. Possibly that was more due to his acumen than to their lucidity. (Laughter.) There were, however, cogent and legitimate reasons why the south and west of Ireland were not so prosperous as Ulster, and the first of these was found in the altered condition of the fishing industry, which was once so flourishing. The Irish had obtained control of the Baltic fish trade to the extent that it excited the desire of the Scotchmen. (Laughter.) The Irish fish brand was withdrawn, and Scotland obtained the Government brand for their fish with a bounty of 4s. per barrel. The woollen trade was also carried on in those districts, but the exportation of wool was prohibited and the trade died out in the south and west of the country. Then the importation of Irish cattle was prohibited, and when, in addition to these facts, the rack-rented condition of the poor tenant was borne in mind reasons would be seen why the south and west of Ireland were not in such a prosperous condition as they might have been in other circumstances. Reference had been made to the shipbuilding trade, the linen trade, and the agriculture of the north as reasons for the prosperity of Belfast. He pointed out, however, that the building land in that town was let on perpetual leases, while in the towns of the south and the west this system of tenure did not exist. Again, there was the tenant-right in Ulster, by which the tenant was partially protected in the fruits of his industry. As to the shipbuilding, he showed that Messrs. Harland and Wolff, being shrewd men of business, saw how favourably Belfast was situated for the carrying on of the shipbuilding trade, the port being adjacent to the iron and coal fields of the south of Scotland, and the reason why Cork had not been so prosperous was because the freights to this town for coal and iron were three times as high as they were to Belfast. The hon. member proceeded to enter into details as to the linen trade for the last 200 years amid manifestations of impatience which induced him to say that when he entered that House he thought he should address an assembly of gentlemen. He had had the honour of displacing a Tory in a metropolitan constituency, and he was not going to be put down. (Laughter.) He denied that creed had anything to do with the success of the linen trade. Belgium had progressed with more rapid strides. He, a Presbyterian born and bred in Belfast, had no fear for Presby-

terianism in Ireland under this Bill. Presbyterianism would stand or fall on its own merits, and if it was wrong the sooner it fell the better. An hon. member near him had recently been on a voyage to America, but he did not point out this important fact—that in America between the two political parties the Roman Catholics were about equally divided, and the Roman Catholic priest never interfered. (Hear, hear.) Why? Because he knew he should be travelling beyond the domain of his duties. It was to be regretted that one Irish Bishop had issued a circular, but no other Bishop approved his action, and the offence was brought home by Roman Catholic witnesses and a Roman Catholic Judge. No, the Ulster farmers were not afraid of that; what they wished was to see justice done between them and their landlords. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. GOSCHEN, who was received with cheers, said.—In that bright bit of banter which was the only answer that the Secretary of State for War gave to the very powerful speech of the noble lord the member for Paddington, the right hon. gentleman commented not severely on the fact of the long debate that was taking place on the first reading of this Bill. I think he said it was in contravention of ordinary Parliamentary practice. I have precedents which I could quote to the House where, on questions of infinitely minor importance compared with this great issue, there had been four, five, and six nights' debate on the first reading. But I am not concerned to establish a precedent for this case, because it appears to me that the Bill itself is unprecedented (cheers); and if this Bill is unprecedented it will be our duty to debate it and to open the eyes of the country to its provisions on every possible occasion. (Cheers.) I entirely agree with the Secretary of State for War that we have had some interesting speeches, and if he said that with justice last night, I think we may still further congratulate ourselves to-day on the prolongation of this debate, looking to the most interesting speeches to which we listened at an earlier part of the evening. But comparatively few Radical supporters of the Government have taken part in this debate. (Hear, hear.) It has not been in order to save time, because the debate would have come to a conclusion in precisely the same number of days even if Radical members had taken part in it. But I can quite understand their abstention, because they found that the whole field of discussion was thoroughly honeycombed with pitfalls into which an unwary supporter of the Government might walk. (Cheers.) What line was he to take up? Was he to defend the precise proposal of the Government with regard to the retention of the Irish members in this House; would it be wise for him to put forward his views after the tentative character of the proposal which was submitted by his leader himself? I think it was very wise that the Radicals did not embarrass themselves in that respect. Again, what should they say of the financial clauses? Should they approve straightway of what my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition called the war indemnity of 17 millions, which is to be paid as the price for the cessation of hostilities?

Mr. GLADSTONE.—Seventeen millions!

Mr. GOSCHEN.—Perhaps the right hon. gentleman did not hear what I said. It is the capital sum representing the £500,000. (Cheers.) Hon. members will admit—if they prefer to have the annual payment rather than the capital taken—they will admit that it is £500,000. Well, were they to approve of the £500,000 a year, and say that that was the correct figure? That would have been a very dangerous position to have

taken up, because hon. members for Ireland declared that the financial proposals of the Government are thoroughly unsatisfactory and that they will have to be remodelled. And point by point hon. members will find pitfalls—some have already begun to stumble into them. (Laughter.) With regard to the safeguards that are offered, the £20 Legislative Chamber has not been received very warmly by Radicals opposite, and I think the Government will find that on this point they are opposed by a very large portion of their own supporters. Therefore I think it perfectly natural that there are comparatively few of the independent English and Scotch supporters of her Majesty's Government who have taken part in the debate. But we have not had much light even from her Majesty's Government. We have had a speech from the Chancellor of the Duchy and a few observations from the Secretary of State for War. The Government have proceeded, it appears to me, upon the principle of partial revelation. They were not prepared to show this great piece of legislation to their followers at once. ("Oh, oh.") I will make good what I say. Take the case of the land. Nothing whatever was said by the Prime Minister upon the land question—this most important question, in regard to which the hon. member for Longford in his most eloquent speech said it must be settled—a matter of primary importance with regard to which the leader of the House had said that the very honour of the House of Commons was engaged. This subject was slipped over entirely and no ray of light was shed upon it. (Cheers.) The Prime Minister, when asked, said he had forgotten to state that the land question would be hung up for three years. It was a very important statement; but how little that was for our guidance! With regard to the veto, it was the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy who had to reveal the fact and to explain the nature of the veto of the Imperial Parliament. The Prime Minister slurred over that important question in one single sentence. He said there will be special occasions when the Viceroy will receive instructions from the Sovereign. That was all that was vouchsafed on the first occasion.

Mr. GLADSTONE.—Very inaccurately stated.

Mr. GOSCHEN.—I have no wish, I can assure the right hon. gentleman, to quote him in any way, but by this I stand—that it was only in a single line that the right hon. gentleman alluded to that part of the Bill. Am I not right, therefore, in saying that this is a system of partial revelation? With regard to the financial question, how inadequate was the first explanation, and as regards the police it was necessary to press into the service of the Government the hon. member for Kerry, who explained what are the police provisions with infinitely greater expansion than the authors of the Bill. (Laughter and cheers.) The Government have proceeded upon this principle—that what light they would throw upon the Bill should be a kind of revolving light, green sometimes, when it was shown to the Irish party, and at other times red to the other sections of the House. (Laughter and cheers.) I should wish to say a word or two on the question of finance, and I should wish to be corrected if I state the general position inaccurately. There appears to me to have been some confusion between the comparison of the financial arrangements of 1886 and the present financial arrangements. It appears to a good many on both sides of the House as if the present demand from Ireland was a much smaller demand than that in 1886, for this reason—that the present contribution

asked for from Ireland is two million three hundred odd thousand pounds, whereas in 1886 it was to be three million two or three hundred thousand pounds. Am I not correct in saying that this difference arises partly from the fact that in the 1886 arrangement the proceeds of the Excise, which are practically paid by the English consumer, remained in the hands of Ireland, whereas it is now to be paid into the English Exchequer? £1,400,000, which under the arrangement of 1886 would have remained with the Irish Exchequer, will now come into the English Exchequer; consequently, the contribution from Ireland must on that account be diminished. If I understand the matter rightly, that is the reason why the present demand appears to be much smaller than the demand in 1886; but, as a matter of fact, I understand that the demand now is practically about the same as that which was made before. (Hear, hear.) I have thought it right to give my opinion on the subject, not in any controversial spirit whatever, but only to avoid misconception. But the sooner we have the statement promised with regard to finance, the better it will be. Look at this financial question for a moment as it is now revealed to us. Without going into figures at all, what is it? The Customs are to be kept for Imperial purposes, the Excise, income-tax, and stamps are to be handed over for Irish purposes. Well, then, what are the Customs duties? The Customs duties mean the duties on tea and tobacco and on foreign spirits; but so far as Ireland is concerned it is on tea and tobacco alone that they will pay contributions to the Imperial Exchequer.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY.—And on foreign spirits.

Mr. GOSCHEN.—Yes, on foreign spirits; but I thought that Ireland, on the whole, would consume its own spirits (laughter), and that foreign spirits would not compete with the admirable beverages (renewed laughter) which are now going to be constituted as the fundamental basis of Irish finance. I will show in a moment that the whole of the Irish finance, as constructed by the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister, depends on whisky. (Laughter.) Now as to customs and Imperial finance, mark this, as the Bill has been explained, if you increase the customs duties you increase the share Ireland has to pay; but if you diminish the customs duties you will diminish the contribution which Ireland will be asked for. What does the hon. member for Leicester, who is in favour of the abolition of the tea duty, say to this proposal? No answer has been given to the point that if the tea duty is reduced the contribution from Ireland is reduced, and if the duty on tobacco is reduced Ireland will no longer pay that share which the Prime Minister thinks it is necessary for her to pay. (Hear, hear.) See, then, how the arms of the Chancellor of the Exchequer are tied in the future in this respect. I must protest with all my might against this tying of the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and embarrassing the finance of the country by making the customs duties dependent upon the maintenance of the Irish contribution. It should be understood that by this measure we are tying our hands as regards customs. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave us the figures which together constitute the Irish contribution—£5,660,000; and that was the total to be paid by Ireland. Of that total, £3,200,000 are excise; and nearly the whole of the excise consists of duties paid upon spirits. The consequence will be this—that the people of Ireland will know that, when they consume tea and tobacco they are paying tribute, as it will be called, to Great Britain, but whisky-drinkers will be supporting the

national finances. (Laughter.) It was the hon. member for Waterford who said, in his very able speech, "We have a balance now of £500,000, but we depend mainly upon the excise." What is, then, to happen if the excise should fail? Why, certainly, the surplus will vanish. The budget of Ireland, as reconstructed, will simply depend upon the consumption of whisky by the people. It will not be increased in other items because their destination will be fixed by Imperial law; and therefore the position is that the finances of the country will depend mainly upon the drinking of the people. I will not inquire to what extent they will then encourage or not encourage those efforts to promote temperance which they have often supported by their votes in this House. (Hear, hear.) Such is the finance; and I feel confident that this scheme of finance cannot stand; it will have to be recast. Neither Irish members nor English members will be prepared to accept such finance. There is one great change that is made in this Bill as compared with the Bill of 1886, and it is that the whole collection of the revenue is to be placed in Irish hands. The income-tax, stamps, and the miscellaneous revenue—all except Customs—are to be put in Irish hands. Every Excise officer will be an officer, not of the Imperial Government, but of the Executive Government; every official in Ireland will be a servant of the new Executive; every collector will be a servant of the Executive. We shall part with the whole collection of the revenue; we shall part with every one who represents her Majesty's Government in Ireland excepting two men—the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy. Every other representative of the sovereignty will have vanished from Ireland except the Viceroy, the red-coated soldier, and the Custom-house officers at the ports. The power of the purse is an immense power, and the right hon. gentleman parts with the power of the purse as regards both collection and expenditure. The whole civil service of Ireland is to be revolutionized and to have a new master. I do not think the right hon. gentleman can quote a precedent for the replacement of a service like the civil service in Ireland such as is to be proposed by this Bill. It is an immense revolution. Do hon. members thoroughly grasp the effect of it? Take Belfast—take Ulster—the whole patronage will be in the hands of the new Executive. (Ministerial cheers.) What protection is there for persons in the Bill? The cheers show in what spirit hon. members will be prepared to administer the Bill in this respect. Looking to the differences between Ulster and the rest of Ireland, looking to the claims of Loyalists in other parts of Ireland, to place the whole patronage, not in the hands of an impartial body, but in the hands of an Executive Government, is a very bold step, which must be regarded by this country with very considerable distrust. Our opponents tell us at every step that we distrust the Irish people (hear, hear), not only that we have mistrust as to what they will do, but that we malign their motives and hold them up to contempt or blame. We have often protested against that insinuation and that charge. It is an absolutely false charge. (Mr. Timothy Healy.—Hottentots.) Does not the hon. member, who is a literary man and knows the English language, know that the word was never employed in the sense which he wishes to give to it? It was a malicious attempt to mislead the public. It is strange that the word should be revived ("It will be revived") at a time which we are told is to be a season of reconciliation and "union of hearts." (Opposition cheers.)

I could quote words in answer to the hon. member for Louth and the hon. member for Longford, but we are told that the sponge is to wipe out all that has been said. We were told by the Secretary of State for War that the language which has been held in Ireland during the last ten years has been the language of excited politicians, and that we ought to forget that language at the present moment. I wish that it were possible to do so. I wish, looking to the reconciliation that we all desire, that we could forget—that it would be right to forget—every violent word that has been spoken on the hillsides of Ireland. (Cheers.) But can we do so? Are we entitled to believe, looking to the duty we owe to the loyalists of Ireland, that the policy which has been announced for years has been abandoned by the Irish party, and abandoned at this moment because moderate words are now asked for? (Cheers.) I am not anxious to introduce controversy into this matter. ("Hear, hear," and Nationalist laughter.) But when we are told, as we have been by the Prime Minister, that we are holding up the Irish nation to contempt, we are bound to reply; and if we are warm in our replies it is not in the spirit of controversy, but rather in a spirit of regret that such charges should be lodged, and lodged against a party who represent a majority of Great Britain, taken as a whole. (Cheers.) Such charges are not calculated to encourage the Irish people to believe in the alleged great desire for reconciliation or in the sincerity of hon. gentlemen opposite. (Cheers.) We protest against such insinuations and such reproaches. The Secretary of War, when he spoke of excited politicians, seemed to think that all the violent language that had been used should be forgotten, because it really meant nothing but heat; but I ask, Has that language had no effect on the Irish peasants? (Cheers.) Can they at once forget all the lessons they have been taught? (Hear, hear.) I wish to know, because this is a very important matter. Has the language with regard to land and landlords which has been used during the last ten years been only so much political capital—so much humbug, so much blarney, indulged in simply in order to make excitement? (Hear, hear.) If so, I can only say that the Irish peasants and tenants have not read it in that light. The excited words of hon. members have lighted a flame in Ireland, and we cannot believe that that flame will at once be smothered because a Home Rule Bill is passed and those hon. members are installed in College-green. The hon. member for Longford seems to think that it will cease at once. Do hon. and right hon. gentlemen opposite think it will so cease? If it does, will the fact not show that all the outcry about judicial rents and other matters was so much mere politics, machinery employed in order to produce a Home Rule Bill? (Cheers.) The hon. member for the city of Cork used these words not long ago:—"The Irish party will never accept any national settlement—any Home Rule settlement—that will not draw the last fangs of landlordism." Are these the words of a serious or of an excited politician? And how will the tenants take these words? The hon. member possibly may be installed as Minister of Agriculture on College-green, and we shall then see whether he will perform this interesting act of dentistry—namely, "drawing the last fangs of landlordism." But we have got to provide securities that this kind of policy should not be carried out, and we have a right to ask—Do hon. members abandon their language in this respect?

(Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman says we use hard words. The leader of the Opposition spoke of plunder. That was a hard word, but it is not harder than "rapine," which was used by a very high authority. (Laughter and cheers.) Hon. members below the gangway call that justice which we call plunder. The fact is they have a different standard. (Cheers.) Through the agrarian difficulty their whole minds are in a different position; their attitude of mind is different. They call landlords robbers. Are they prepared to give up the demand for "restitution"? It is these questions which must be faced; and are they to be faced? (Cheers.) Now I ask the Chief Secretary—What is to become of the land during the next three years? Are the landlords of Ireland to bleed to death during that period? Do her Majesty's Government intend to deal with the land themselves, or has the whole subject gone by the board? We consider that the Government, after their declarations in 1886 and the attitude they have taken throughout, are bound in honour to deal with the land question. The question of education cannot be disposed of as the hon. member for Louth tried to dispose of it this afternoon. The hon. member said that perhaps the Irish would show us an example of civil and religious liberty. The hon. member comes to us from abroad, and I am sure I am echoing the words of every hon. member when I say we rejoice to see the hon. member amongst us, and that we were glad to hear his eloquent speech. We welcome him as an addition to this House. (Cheers.) But the hon. member has not known what has been going on with regard to education in Ireland, the bitter controversies, the Roman Catholics doing their utmost to carry out a policy which the Protestants have strenuously resisted. The Roman Catholic majority will have the power of the purse, and that power will be able to decide many most important questions in regard to education. There are Protestant schools, not in Ulster, but in the south of Ireland, which have struggled enough to maintain themselves. They can only be maintained by an impartial administration. How will the Education Board be constituted in future, and what weight will be thrown upon it? I say, in connexion with education, that again you can introduce into this Bill no securities when you have parted with the whole of the executive power. I am relieved from the necessity of dealing with the vast changes which would take place through the transfer of executive power by the most powerful speech of the right hon. member for West Birmingham. He showed the power of the Executive. If hon. members had the whole of the personnel in their hands the power of the purse would be also in their hands, and they would be making a revolution quite as great and as serious as any revolution which could be made in any other manner. (Hear, hear.) What securities are we to have? This is the question put by the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham. He spoke of the Legislative Council—and here I may observe that no answer has been given to a very good point made by the member for Plymouth when he asked why this figure of 48 has been introduced. (Hear, hear.) He showed that this figure of 48 would prevent the Legislative Council ever having a majority if they sat together with the popular Assembly. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, this very security, this very body intended to protect the loyalists, is in its very origin generated by a piece of gerrymandering. (Cheers.) We have already had notice with regard to this part of the case. There are a large number of hon. members opposite who

will attack this principle. Not only the member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), but the member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir George Trevelyan) will come down and make one of these speeches with which we are familiar, showing that this is a privilege which has been established, and that it will have to be abolished. (Hear, hear.) Then we come to the question of the veto. The hon. member for Longford said that he was content with the provision in the Bill. He said that the veto would be used on the advice of the Irish Cabinet by the Viceroy. That is no veto at all. If the Viceroy is to act on the advice of the Irish Cabinet that is simply asking him to veto a Bill which they themselves have passed. (Cheers.) Such a security is not worth the paper on which it is written. (Hear, hear.) As to the other veto, the question was ably dealt with by the hon. member for Longford. He went through the speech of the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham, but he did not tell us what advantage Canada has experienced with regard to the veto, nor what the Canadian people would think if the Canadian Parliament was subjected to the same kind of veto. Canada is placed in a totally different position from Ireland. Is Canada a nation or not? We look upon Canada as a loyal and devoted colony. (Hear, hear.) The Canadians do not claim to be a nation, and yet they have their own tariff; they are not tied down as regards representation; they have fiscal freedom—freedom in every respect, and yet they are not a nation; and the hon. member speaks of Ireland as a nation. (Hear, hear.) He spoke of her national rights, and yet he thinks that Ireland will be satisfied with an infinitely lower concession of privileges than is given to Canada. (Hear, hear.) A country that claims to be a nation is to be satisfied with less than a colony demands. (Hear, hear.) How often does the veto require to be exercised in Canada? I have not the same knowledge of Canada as I have of other colonies, but we know that whenever there is a question of the exercise of the veto there is an agitation at once, and they speak of separation. (Hear, hear.) In the Australian colonies they say, "If the English Government forces this upon us we will not be responsible for the consequences." Both the hon. member for Waterford and the hon. member for Kerry told us that they consent to a nominal supremacy and that the weapon of the veto is not to be used.

Mr. SEXTON.—I never said so.

Mr. GOSCHEN.—I have the hon. member's speech in my pocket. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman said, "The framing of the Home Rule Bill will amount to a compact which no doubt will be observed on both sides so that there would be no arbitrary and capricious interference by Parliament." (Cheers.) And then the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham asks a question, which has not been answered, "How are the words 'arbitrary and capricious' to be interpreted?" How are you to judge?

Mr. SEXTON.—Leave it to common sense. (Cheers.)

Mr. GOSCHEN.—The hon. member has not only common-sense but great acuteness, and if time permitted I could put to him a great many questions as to what he considers capricious and vexatious, and I think his definition of those words and the definition of the majority of the British people would probably be very different. (Mr. Sexton.—"I think not," and cheers.) The hon. member is a politician enough to know that as regards capriciousness, at all events the

views of the contending parties will always be diametrically opposite. (Hear, hear.) This vote, then, is not to be used ; or, if it is frequently used, if it is used for purposes for which a majority of the people of Great Britain may claim to use it, we have fair notice from hon. members below the gangway as to the consequences : the 80 members from Ireland will know how to give a good account of themselves. (Hear, hear.) One other question on which I wish to touch is that most important one of the retention of the Irish members in this House. The Secretary of State for War in his interesting speech last night treated this question in the lightest possible way. He seemed to say, "There is no difficulty about the matter at all. *Solvitur ambulando*, we will settle it as we toddle along." (Laughter.) When I heard the first intimation we had on this subject the old quotation occurred to me, *solvuntur risu tabulae*, and I thought the right hon. gentleman would be laughed out of court. I should like to have been present in the Cabinet when the Prime Minister expounded his views and said, I suppose, "I do not want to have lopsided members in the House, members with limited liability." Then I presume the Secretary for War got up and said airily, "*Solvitur ambulando* ; there is no difficulty ; why, a town council could settle the matter." (Laughter.) We have heard of something that baffled the wit of man, and yet the Secretary for War thinks that a town council could solve the problem. But that is not the opinion of others. Lord Rosebery, for example, did not think that you can settle this question as you "toddle along," for he said not long ago :—"If you say, as many have said, 'We will admit the Irish members, but only for Imperial matters,' what are you going to do with the Irish members when Imperial matters are not going on ? Is the Speaker to ring a bell and say, 'The Irish members may come in ?' Then some hon. member who may object will rise and say, 'I object to the presence of the Irish members ; this is not an Imperial matter,' and then we shall have a debate of two nights as to whether the question under discussion is Imperial or not. Then, the Irish members having been admitted, you may find the Speaker ringing his bell and saying, 'Irish members may retire.' You will thus have these unfortunate Irish members in a state of perpetually suspended and restored animation." (Laughter.) I think that the right hon. gentleman is a little hard upon his colleagues in treating the matter so lightly as he treated it last night. I should like to read the following passage from the late Chief Secretary. He said :—"I do not care what precautions we might take. I do not care where you draw the line in theory, you may depend upon it there is no power on earth which can prevent the Irish members from being in the future what they have been in the past—the arbiters and masters of the English policy and English legislative business" (loud cheers) "and of the rise and fall of British Administrations." (Cheers.) Let us mark these words. No single member who addressed himself to this subject has been able to disprove this assertion. (Cheers.) It had been proved over again. I should like to know whether the country will admit the truth of what has been said, that if you pass this Home Rule Bill no power on earth will prevent these gentlemen below the gangway from being masters of English legislation. (Cheers.) Have you tried to prevent it or do you admit that you have not prevented it ? I think the Prime Minister admits it has not been prevented, and we shall —

Mr. GLADSTONE.—I said that it would not apply

to 19-20ths or 99-100ths of the business of Parliament. (Ministerial cheers.)

Mr. GOSCHEN.—Yea ; but if the 20th means or the 100th means the fall of an Administration engaged in English legislation by a combination of the English minority and the Irish, what then ? It cannot be answered. (Cheers.) I do not think that hon. members have tried to answer it. Well, if that is so, the Irish members are to remain in this condition. (Cheers.) Can that be permitted ? We are asked to vote for this measure partly on the ground of finality ; I think finality has been repudiated by the hon. member for Waterford. The hon. member for Longford seems to think that Mr. Parnell had accepted the Bill in 1886 as a final settlement. That statement was denied in public and it could not be a final settlement ; and as it is not a final settlement we are to retain the Irish members in this House to be the arbiters and masters of the English Parliament. (Cheers.) We have neither got the security in this Bill nor finality. I believe that from the Bill you will have to remove the finality part ; you will have to change a great deal connected with the second legislative Chamber and the Irish representation. (Cheers.) I wonder how much will remain of the whole Bill. (Laughter and cheers.) We should like to see the Bill (Ministerial cheers), and we are glad that the sight of the Bill will have been accompanied by this debate. There is much hidden away in the Bill. There are many little clauses, the effect of which would never have appeared unless this debate had taken place. (Opposition cheers.) It is not easy to read in a little clause how the Irish remain the masters and arbiters of English legislation. (Cheers.) These things are not found in a Bill. We shall see the Bill to-morrow, and we shall then be able to judge how far even the policy, as announced, has been carried out by the right hon. gentleman ; but that Bill will never pass into law. (Loud Opposition cheers.) It will be added to the Bill of 1886, and very probably there will be a future third attempt. They will not be bound up in the Acts of the realm (laughter and cheers), but they will be bound up in a little volume which may be headed "Failures to solve the insoluble." (Laughter.) The problem is insoluble (cheers), and therefore I attach no blame to the Cabinet for being unable to solve it. They ask for incompatible things. They wish to retain the English sovereignty, and at the same time to make Ireland a nation (cheers) ; to maintain the fiscal unity, and yet to give a separate finance to Ireland ; to allow the Imperial Parliament to go on deciding Imperial questions, and to have us here deciding British questions without the Irish. No doubt the attempt is made from what may be called a righteous motive but it must fail. (Cheers.) These Bills were introduced originally—and the Chief Secretary contributed very much towards their introduction—with a feeling of despair (cheers) from the idea that this country had been proved impotent to govern one of the integral parts of the kingdom. There were others who desired to make more rapid progress with English legislation. They were content to abandon the Irish loyalists for that object. But now I admit to the full that amongst hon. and right hon. gentlemen opposite there is a large class, perhaps the majority, who have given up the ideas of despair and of convenience, and who are animated by the simple desire for conciliation—the attempt to unite the Irish and the English peoples. I can imagine the immense attraction which such a hope must have for the Prime Minister. (Cheers.) There

is no operation in engineering which has a greater attraction to ambitious and clever engineers than the construction of a bridge which will bridge a wide chasm. The right hon. gentleman has had that ambition, and it is a noble ambition. (Loud Ministerial cheers.) But the foundations of that bridge must be firm. (Opposition cheers.) It must be so constructed that it will bear the stress of storms; and that strength we do not see in the bridge which the right hon. gentleman attempts to construct. But, in all sincerity, I have acknowledged the desire of the right hon. gentleman for this conciliation; but let him and his friends in their turn also give us credit for the motives which make us resist this Bill, and which will continue to animate us to resistance. (Cheers.) It is no small motive. It has been pointed out to-day by the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham, in language so powerful that I will not attempt to imitate it, that we believe, rightly or wrongly, the integrity of the Empire to be at stake. (Cheers.) We may be mistaken (Ministerial cheers), but at least it is a motive which, if hon. gentlemen opposite felt it, would make them fight as we do; and they would not think that we were merely wasting the time of the House. We believe that the highest interests ever intrusted to Parliament depend upon our action. (Cheers.) And there is another motive which is inspiring us—a motive which you are bound to respect, if you cannot share it. Cannot your imaginations carry to you the idea that we feel the dictates of honour compel us to stand by the loyalists of Ireland? (Loud cheers.) Cannot you feel what we feel and have repeated so often, that these loyalists of Ireland have believed in the British connexion, and have stood by it in good times and bad? And is it right now to hurl all these remonstrances at them, as the Prime Minister did, because they have not thrown in their lot with those who desire to separate from the United Kingdom? (Cheers.) We are bound to stand by them; and never in the history of the world has a great Power like this country consented to abandon a population of a million who desired to remain under its sway. You talk of reconciliation, but in that reconciliation the million loyalists ought to take part; and so long as they stand by in despair we will not surrender to any demands which would bring about the betrayal of those who have been true to us. (Cheers.) I should like to quote to the Prime Minister the words of one of his leaders, Sir Robert Peel—words spoken in 1834 in opposing the motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the Repeal of the Union. That debate lasted for four nights. It was not supposed that on a question like that the opportunities for debate should be stifled. (Hear, hear.) Sir Robert Peel said:—“*Opposuit natura; physical necessity forbids repeal.*” Those words are true now; and this Bill is repeal. (Loud cheers.) Nearly 60 years have passed since then, and in that period our honourable obligations to the loyalists of Ireland have increased and grown, and constitute now an additional duty to the people of this country to resist the demands by which they will be lost to the British rule. (Cheers.) Sir Robert Peel said:—“*Opposuit natura; physical necessity prevents it.*” We add, honour forbids it. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. MORLEY, who on rising was received with loud cheers said,—I can assure my right hon. friend who has just sat down that we on this side of the House do not in any way underrate either the strength or the sincerity or the uprightness of

the motives of hon. gentlemen like himself and those who take his point of view with regard to this question. (Hear, hear.) But I think he is rather unfair in charging us by implication with trying to scamp this discussion. The right hon. gentleman said, “Let us have the Bill,” and then he attempted to justify the four nights’ debate which has taken place. I think this plea for the length of the debate would have been a little better justified if the debate had been followed by a division. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman harped on the phrase “partial revelations.” Whose fault is it that the revelations have been partial? If the debate had stopped on Monday night you would have had the Bill the next day. Is it not absurd to charge us with making partial revelations? The right hon. gentleman was very angry at being accused or suspected of distrust of Irishmen. Why should he regard that as so wounding an accusation when we remember that 14 years ago the whole of his policy upon domestic legislation was stamped by a distrust of his countrymen. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman touched upon certain points of finance, but he almost put himself out of court as a financial authority—if I may say so without disrespect—by his borrowing the extraordinary figures which were used by the right hon. gentleman the leader of the Opposition on the first night of the debate. My right hon. friend adopting those figures says, “We are going to pay to Ireland a tribute of £17,000,000.” How did he get those figures? That is the capital value of £500,000 per annum, but that figure is absolutely misleading and absolutely worthless, because the £500,000 per annum, be it too much or too little, represents a vanishing charge. (Hear, hear.) Yet both my right hon. friend and the leader of the Opposition treat this vanishing charge as if it were a permanent charge—that is to say, he capitalized the amount and then taunted us with paying that tribute to Ireland. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman made some remarks upon the subject of the Civil servants in Ireland, and said that there would be a great displacement of them; and he illustrated this by saying that when this Bill becomes law the officers in the postal service will be no longer nominated by the English Post Office Department, but by the native Government. What a dreadful thing that such a change should take place, and that the nomination of the postal servants should be taken away from Englishmen and put into the hands of the population of the country! Then, as to the land question, the right hon. gentleman suggested that the future Irish Government might institute legislation which, said he, they—i.e., hon. gentlemen on this side of the House—would call plunder. I have never paid much attention to these high-flown words from the lips of hon. gentlemen upon the bench opposite, remembering, as I do, what occurred in 1887. (Cheers.) What Act could an Irish Parliament pass as to which either Lord Salisbury or the leader of the Opposition in this House could use stronger language than they both employed only about a month before the passing of that measure? (Cheers.) Lord Salisbury then said that any revision of judicial rents would be dishonest, and the leader of the Opposition stated that, in his opinion, it would be fraudulent, monstrous, and so forth. And yet a month later, after considerable vacillation, they passed a measure which, if it were passed by an Irish Parliament, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer would have characterized as an act of injustice or of plunder. Then the late Chancellor of the Exchequer asked—What is to become of the Irish land question during

the next three years; do we intend to deal with Irish land? My answer is, that the Irish land question will remain, during those three years, as it is at present, subject to be dealt with if any emergency arises. (Irreconcilable laughter.) I do not know what there is in this to excite ridicule. It seems to me a very reasonable proposition. My right hon. friend then made a truly extraordinary reference upon the matter of education. He said that the hon. member for South Longford could not have known what had been going on in Ireland during the past six months in regard to education. I suppose my right hon. friend had been referring to certain proceedings before the National Board, and said that those proceedings were a warning of what would happen if there were a Catholic majority in the Irish Parliament, of which Archbishop Walsh would be the dictator. If my right hon. friend inquired, he would have known that the proposals which were made to us had the support of Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, of the Senior Fellow of Trinity College, and of three other Protestant authorities.

Mr. GOSCHEN.—I alluded to no particular proceedings.

Mr. MORLEY.—Then I cannot imagine to what the right hon. gentleman did refer. (Laughter and cheers.)

Mr. GOSCHEN.—The right hon. gentleman surely must be aware of the numerous discussions there were upon every kind of question when compulsory education for Ireland was discussed. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. MORLEY.—Among other things it was imputed to my predecessor the Chief Secretary and to the gentlemen who sit round him by the member for South Tyrone that they, and not Archbishop Walsh, were designing to make this change. (Nationalist cheers.)

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL.—The right hon. gentleman is not entitled to make any such assertion to this House. I never imputed anything of the kind. (Opposition cheers.)

Mr. MORLEY.—I am speaking from recollection, and if I am in error in supposing that it was the hon. gentleman, I am certainly not in error in saying that the hon. member for South Antrim made a distinct charge in this House against the right hon. gentleman. (Ministerial cheers.) This only shows that the right hon. gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer was merely uttering a platitude as to the true facts of there being a Parliament in Dublin, and that he entirely overlooked the fact that the only demand that Archbishop Walsh has so far made has been backed by Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, by the senior Fellow of Trinity College, and by three other Protestant authorities. The debate to-night, I gladly recognize, has reached a higher level than debates in this House sometimes attain, and the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham did what he promised when he said he would abstain from the recriminatory arguments which sometimes play a larger part in his speeches than one likes to see. The duel between him and the hon. member for West Longford was worthy of the best traditions of this House. (Cheers.) I look upon discussions of that kind—which I believe would be frequent enough in an Irish Parliament—as among the prime agencies in enabling all sections of Irishmen, who are divided by old feuds and by new feuds, to understand each other, and to find better and surer ways out of their difficulties. (Nationalist cheers.) The right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham said that the tests which he should apply to any Home Rule plan were:—“Did such a plan satisfy Imperial unity; did it satisfy the demand for the supremacy of Parliament; did it furnish

guarantees for the protection of minorities?” I must be allowed to say that the right hon. gentleman attached a very peculiar significance to each one of those three phrases. As I listened to his speech and followed, as attentively as I could, all his arguments, I found that this was the net result—that by Imperial unity he did not mean Imperial unity at all, but simply centralization (hear, hear); that by the supremacy of Parliament he meant the negation of self-government (hear, hear); that by the protection of minorities he meant the prolonged ascendancy of Ulster backed by one English party. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman deals in sinister prophecies. I should think more highly of him as a prophet if his prescience had come a little earlier and his promises, both to Ireland and in other matters, had been more abundantly fulfilled. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman makes light of the fact that the declaration of the supremacy of Parliament comes in the preamble, following in this, I believe, the authority of the hon. and learned member for Plymouth. But may I say, without disrespect to the hon. and learned gentleman, that there was a Sir Edward Coke before there was a Sir Edward Clarke (laughter); and Sir Edward Coke said this:—“The preamble is the key to the statute.” (Cheers and laughter.) I do not know whether the hon. and learned gentleman knows his “Coke” (laughter), but that is our answer to the very light store which the right hon. gentleman sets on the declaration in the preamble. The right hon. gentleman also enumerates what are called the restrictions and exceptions as so many badges of servitude. The taking away of property with due process of law and with provision for just compensation, together with other restrictions, are not badges of servitude. They are recognized as the principles upon which the foundations of every free modern Government must be built up. (Cheers.) The right hon. gentleman predicted, as did also the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, various evils from various denominations. He said there was nothing to prevent an Irish Parliament from practically endowing the priests by voting salaries for clerical managers and schools. Of course there is no end to prophecies of that kind; but one must look at this question largely and broadly, and in the light of experience. I am not going back to the debate on the Meath election. The right hon. member for Bury did me the honour to quote several passages from various writings of mine as to clerical domination and priestly usurpation. I have not much, perhaps I have nothing, to unsay; but I rest my defence of the proposal to set up a free Parliament in Ireland on a broad political proposition—which, I maintain, is supported by all the lessons of European experience; and that proposal is this—I do not say how much priestly usurpation prevails in Ireland—the way to baffle priestly usurpation, if usurpation there be, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, as distinct from sacerdotal influence in the region of faith and morals—the way to baffle priestly usurpation is to confront it by a strong leading national representative political authority. That is my answer to that most important point; and I repeat in this House what I have often said out of it, that there is not a Catholic country in Europe in which the priesthood have achieved a standing political supremacy. Then my right hon. friend who has just sat down, and the right hon. gentleman the member for West Birmingham and other speakers, have gone through the anomalies which will arise if Irish members are retained at Westminster under the plan proposed in the Bill. These anomalies are

perfectly obvious ; it requires no ingenuity, no skill, no ability to trace them all out and expose them. My right hon. friend exposed them sufficiently the first night. (Opposition cheers.) But if it be granted—as we maintain, of course you do not accept it—but if it be granted that it is a matter of the highest national and political expediency that a Legislature and a national Government should be erected in Ireland, then this question of the manner in which the Irish members are to retain their seats and voting power in this House is a question—I do not call it secondary in relation to the Parliamentary constitution, because it is not—but it is secondary to the great object, the paramount object, for which we start. And the mere fact that the arrangement proposed is anomalous can scarcely be pressed very hard by gentlemen opposite. I will give them an illustration, if they will allow me, of an anomaly in the existing Constitution. This Bill will pass this House. (Cheers and cries of "Question.") They knew that. (Opposition cries of "No.") But you do, and that is why your leaders go about saying that, whatever this House does, all will be set right in another place. (Cheers.) That is the whole point of that often-repeated remark. Now, is there no anomaly in such a state of things as that when we, after seven years of stress and controversy in the country, achieved a majority for a certain policy in this House—(cheers, and cries of "No.") How can hon. gentlemen keep saying "No"? If I am wrong in that, then the Bill will not pass. If the Bill passes that will show that we have got a majority in this House. Very well. We achieve a majority in this House, and you who protest against anomalies are leaning upon the rejection of this Bill in a House which is not representative (loud cheers), and where the majority in this House as now constituted will, perhaps, be represented for aught I know by 40 or 48 votes. Why, if you are going to begin hunting up all the anomalies you can find you should look at old institutions. (Cheers.) After all there is one broad question which I put without the slightest desire to enter into any recriminatory discussion which may be in the slightest degree annoying to the Dissenting Liberals ("Oh") below the gangway. I think it deserves an answer.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN.—Liberal Unionists. (Laughter.)

Mr. J. MORLEY was resuming, when

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN rose and said,—We do not call you Separatists because you object to that word. I ask you to call us by the name we have chosen. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. J. MORLEY.—I assure the right hon. gentleman that I would just as soon use the one word as the other, and if "Liberal Unionist" is pleasanter to the ears than "Dissident Liberal" I shall use the term. But when he says that he and his friends never call us Separatists (laughter)—well, that is taxing the credulity of the House to a large degree. (Cheers.) The Liberal Unionists owe us an answer to this question. In 1886, and constantly since—as the member for Bodmin has reminded us—they declared that they were ready to give to Ireland the utmost measure of self-government compatible with the safety of the Empire ; that they would give everything to Ireland that England and Scotland had. (Hear, hear.) They have been in power these six years ; for those years they have been in a majority. It is quite true that the member for Manchester was coerced into bringing in a Bill for improving local government in Ireland. But oh ! what a Bill. (Laughter.) That Bill

was not passed. (Renewed laughter.) It was laughed out of the House ; and I am bound to say that nobody laughed at it more heartily than its author. (Hear, hear.) This is the position in which we now stand. You refused our proposals for Home Rule in 1886, and you said you had an alternative policy—namely, to widen popular institutions in Ireland within safe limits, to give Irishmen a greater share in the government of their own country. The member for West Birmingham in these days used to say that—it was in 1885—the Irishman had no share in the government of his own country. That is eight years ago. What has he done, with all his power, with all his supporters in the Midlands and in this House, to give a single Irishman, let him be an Ulsterman or not, an increased share in the government of his country? (Cheers.) What reform has been effected in Ireland during the last seven years when the late Government and their allies had the whole administration of Ireland and the whole machinery of this House and the votes of this House —

Mr. ASQUITH.—Of both Houses.

Mr. MORLEY.—Quite true ; the votes of both Houses in their hands ? That is a question which they ought to answer. They may deplore Home Rule as much as they please, and I do not impugn their motives when they do so ; but they know as well as we know that the present state of things in Ireland, the present exclusion of Irishmen from all part in the government of their country, the absence in Ireland of all local institutions which are the very sources of our political system—they knew that until something is done to remedy that state of things, England is dishonoured and Ireland is misgoverned. (Cheers.) Mr. Speaker, I thought I discovered a consciousness of this weakness in the speech of the right hon. gentleman opposite and those of his political friends. I notice that in no part of his arguments did he reject or repudiate Home Rule as a principle. What he did, without really going into the heart of the argument, was to criticize our plan. I wondered whether the right hon. gentleman, in the event of the Government being defeated, was revolving in his mind the possibility of another Round Table Conference. (Laughter and cheers.) I do not know whether I shall be invited to take a seat at it, but if I am it will be my duty to decline. (Laughter.) My right hon. friend the member for Bodmin made a speech full of argument, and brought forward some criticisms on the Bill, but many of them were not at all to the point, because my right hon. friend had not seen the Bill. And that shows what I must describe as the futility of these prolonged discussions before a Bill is brought in. (Hear, hear.) Hon. gentlemen get up and say, "I do not know what is in the Bill, but if this is in the Bill it is wrong." We say, "You must wait until you see the Bill." (Hear, hear.) Every one of my right hon. friend's points will be met, I do not say satisfactorily to him, by the Bill, and the Bill will convince him that his points have been considered when he sees it. My right hon. friend said that the weakness of the Constitution proposed in the Bill is shown by the character of the Assembly, or Lower House. He said there is no power in it sufficient to protect minorities. Then I knew well what was coming. (Laughter.) My right hon. friend deserves all credit, I am sure, for the honourable persistency with which he adheres to his panacea that there should be a proper representation of minorities ; but surely my right hon. friend must know that you can introduce no plan for the representation of minorities in Ireland which will

Addendum (House of Commons).

attain the end he desires, because the minorities, outside a narrow though important circumscription, are too small to be distinct. One is always sorry to deprive any one of his idol; but my right hon. friend ought to realize that of all places Ireland is the place where a plan for the artificial representation of minorities would be least able to secure the object he has in view. The right hon. member for Manchester said a few words about the Irish Constabulary with which in substance I concur. The right hon. gentleman dwelt upon the unfairness that would be perpetrated, and for which this Parliament would be responsible, if there were any slackness in the full acceptance of all the obligations the Imperial Government has entered into with that important and valuable force. I should regard myself as one of the unworthiest of Ministers if I were a party to any transaction which did not recognize in the very fullest way every obligation that has been entered into with the men and officers in that force. The right hon. gentleman may depend upon it that, in the Bill and in schedules which may not be inserted in the first instance, we have not lost sight of what is due to that great and important force. (Hear, hear.) The late Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed to the difficulties which attend the arrangements for the fixing, imposition, and collection of Customs duties. Upon finance generally it is too late to expatiate; but it is important I should say that there is a clause in the Bill laying down the principle that, while accepting the customs as a full discharge under present circumstances of revenue and of charge, the Imperial Exchequer may be entitled to further aid in a fair proportion from Ireland, should those circumstances undergo a material change, or should any great common emergency arise. As regards the particulars of this and one or two other clauses, our present knowledge of the facts does not enable us to give them their final form. We acknowledge and do honour to the office which is rightly assumed by gentlemen from Ireland, as the champions of their country, not only in political respects, but in financial respects also; and their views and suggestions will receive from us the most careful consideration. On future stages of the Bill we shall be glad further to state our views. We regard the committee as the decisive stage. When we know the exact accurate estimate of revenue and of charge for the coming year we can consider not merely in provisional, but in precise terms, the language in which the clause should be finally expressed. I will not detain the House longer, as the general arguments on Home Rule will be better dealt with in the remarks on the second reading. The only point made strongly to-night was this—in case of war we should find ourselves at an immense disadvantage, and that the moment would be seized upon by gentlemen from Ireland to wring and extort concessions from us. The right hon. gentleman seems to have forgotten that 1782, when Grattan's Parliament was granted, was the year when Britain's power stood at its very lowest. But in all these arguments as to the effect of Irish legislation on the power of this country, hon. gentlemen seem to forget that there is no reason why the safety and greatness of the Empire are incompatible with the happiness of all those who live in it. (Cheers.) All the arguments against this Bill, except, perhaps, that used by the right hon. member for Bodmin, have dwelt on the assumption that Ireland is a constant, perpetual, and irreconcileable enemy. We accept no such proposition. I, for one, would never accept it, and I can only say that the more I see of Ireland, and the more I am brought into relations with different kinds of Irishmen—and I have some friends who are called loyalists as well as a great many who are Nationalists—the more convinced I am that there are no people more ready to profit by a free Parliamentary Government. (Cheers.) The right hon. member for Birmingham taxed us with going into these proposals with a light heart. I have never gone into this difficulty with a light heart. I have always felt that it was a serious task in which we have embarked; and I know there are risks, though I believe they are not

great. I am, like the right hon. gentleman, for insurance, and we are insured. (Cheers.) The last time I spoke in this House upon a Home Rule Bill comes into my mind. I warned the House that if they rejected that Bill, as they did, they must not think that the Irish Sphinx would gather up her rags and immediately depart from our gates. That prophecy has come true. It is as true to-night as it was seven years ago. (Cheers.) It is because I believe now as firmly as I did then that only by such a measure we shall exorcise this evil spirit in Ireland, and between Ireland and England, that I ask this House to allow us to introduce this Bill. (Loud cheers.)

The SPEAKER then put the question "That leave be given to introduce the Bill." There was a loud cry of "Ay" from the Ministerialist and Nationalist benches, and a few cries of "No" from the Opposition, and the Speaker declared that the "Ayes" have it.

Mr. GLADSTONE having stated that the names which backed the Bill were those of himself, Mr. Asquith, and the Attorney-General, proceeded to the bar and then brought up the Bill to the table, amid loud demonstrations of enthusiasm from the Ministerialists and the Nationalists. The Bill was read first time, and the second reading was fixed for Monday, March 13.

PILLS ADVANCED.

The Plumbers' Registration Bill was read a second time.

The Municipal Corporations Act (1882) Amendment Bill was read a second time.

AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

On the motion for the adjournment of the House,

Mr. CHAPLIN said he understood that at a very early hour in the afternoon the President of the Board of Agriculture gave notice that on Monday next he would move for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the subject of agricultural depression. He would ask when they would have the terms of the motion, and also whether, in view of the great interest taken in it by the country, it would be put down as the first order of the day.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said he understood that his right hon. friend had already put the terms of the motion on the paper, and they would appear on the paper in the morning. He could give no assurance as to its being made the first order. No doubt the question was important and the House would have a proper opportunity for discussing it.

Mr. GARDNER said that the motion that a committee he appointed had been already affirmed by a majority of 40 on the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne. (Mr. Chaplin.—Certainly not.) He appealed to the House whether it had not been previously alluded to by the mover of the Address, and accepted by a majority of 40. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. CHAPLIN said that there would be no opportunity of placing an amendment on the paper if it were necessary to do so when the House met on Monday. He asked for a distinct assurance that the motion would not be taken next Monday.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said that the Government would do what appeared to be necessary to give hon. members the opportunity of raising objections. He hoped that the right hon. gentleman opposite would find that the terms of the reference were large enough to satisfy him.

Mr. GOSCHEN observed that those who sat with him on the front Opposition bench did not accept the view that it had been determined by a majority of 40 that the House would agree to the committee. The decision of the House in the debate on the Address was not as to the acceptance of the committee offered by the Government.

Mr. TIMOTHY HEALY accused the occupants of the front Opposition bench and their supporters of a sinister design to prevent any business being transacted after 12 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1 o'clock.

24 MAY 1898

